Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred
Vol. 33, Issue 6
JUNE 2025

No Place Like Home

Maryland-bred Road to Oz soars to Hunt Cup triumph

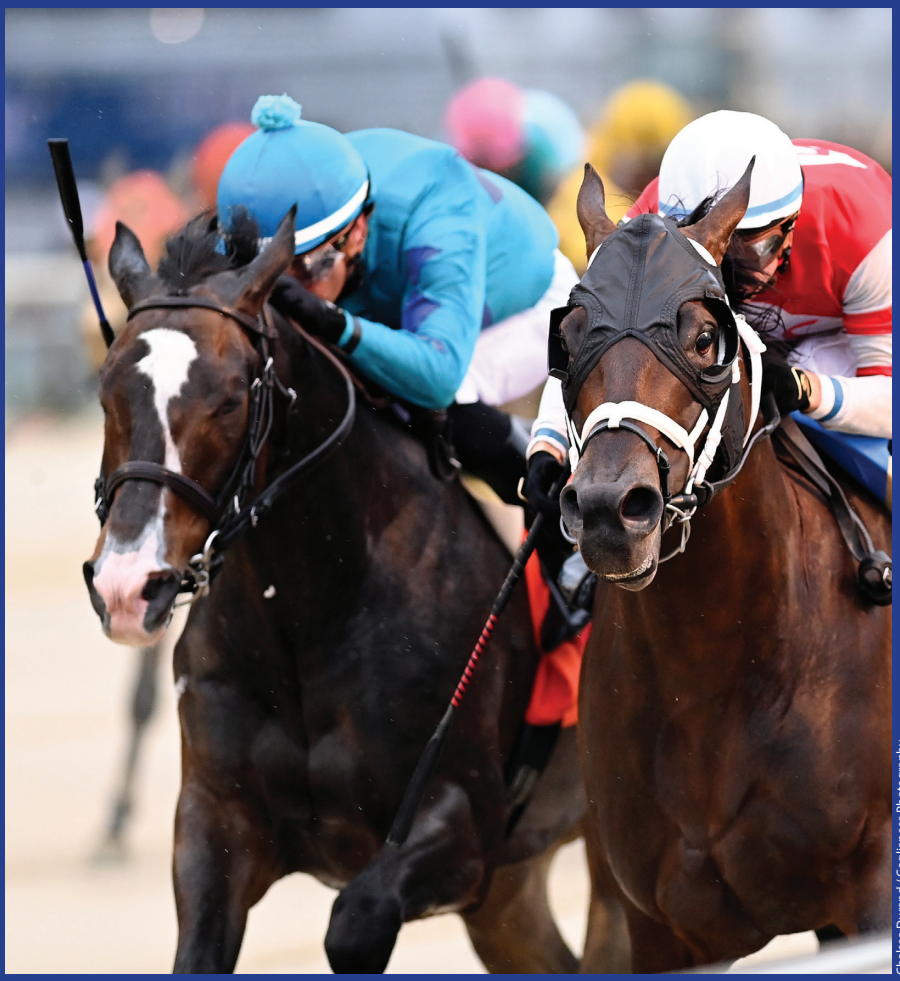
COUNTRY LIFE & MERRYLAND
From Beginning to Winning

Just Like Their Sire, Moslers are Gritty at the Wire

Jim McCue

Susie Raisher / Coglianese Photography

Coglianese Photography


Chelsea Durand / Coglianese Photography

Stakes performers up and down the East Coast. Top left: Mosler's 3-year-old daughters **MOON CACHE** and **SAFE TRUST** finish noses apart in the $100,000 Beyond the Wire S at Laurel in March. (MOON CACHE was DQ'd, elevating SAFE TRUST to first). Middle: Mosler's 3-year-old son **SAXTON** runs second by a neck in the $125,000 Jimmy Winkfield S on March 15 at Aqueduct. Bottom: Their stakes-winning sire **MOSLER** shown ears pinned at the wire in his $100,000 Elusive Quality S victory.

Above: MOSLER'S 4-year-old **QUINT'S BREW** (blue silks), winner of the General George Stakes at Laurel in February, before gritty second-place finishes in the Gr. 2 $300,000 Carter S at Aqueduct on April 5, and (pictured) in the Gr. 3 $175,000 Westchester S at the Belmont-at-The Big A meet on May 4. QUINT'S BREW has earnings of $341,240 with 4 wins, 3 seconds in 7 starts. SAFE TRUST's earnings stand at $245,495. SAXTON has earned $148,090.

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Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

— Set List —

Maryland Hunt Cup: Road to Oz finds magic

Bred in Maryland by Larry Johnson, Road to Oz rallies in time to capture the timber classic in thriller for owner Dan Baker, trainer Mark Beecher. By Joe Clancy. Page 28

Grand National: Irish-bred shines over timber

Second at My Lady's Manor a week earlier, former big-time hurdle prospect Wrestlingwithrae becomes a stakes winner over timber for Michael Smith, Leslie Young. By Joe Clancy. Page 36

My Lady's Manor: Timber season comes to life

Maryland-bred Bogey's Image delivers on promise with stakes win for trainer Joe Davies and ownership team with deep ties to the state. Hunt Cup winner Road to Oz third on undercard. By Joe Clancy. Page 42

Maryland-bred 2-year-old goes international

Purchased by an Irish-based pinhooker at Keeneland September, Maryland-bred Maxfield colt sells to Godolphin for seven figures at French breeze-up sale. By Joe Clancy and Ali Çetinok. Page 48

Steeplechase Times: Wild few weeks for Watters

Jump jockey Graham Watters won a historic Temple Gwathmey on Snap Decision in April, wound up in the hospital that day and rebounded in time to win two stakes at the Virginia Gold Cup. By Sean Clancy. Page 51

Trackside Laurel Park: Pedigree powers Fore Harp

Sire Weigelia and broodmare Katarica Disco come through – again – as Fore Harp lands King T. Leatherbury Stakes for trainer Butch Reid. By Paul Halloran. Page 56

On our cover: Road to Oz soars over the 13th fence on his way to victory in the Maryland Hunt Cup timber stakes.

Photo by Douglas Lees

— Entries —

Post Time 6

The Starting Gate 8

Next Chapters 22
Badleroibrown

From the Editor 26

— The Paddock —

Maryland newsletter 61

New Jersey newsletter 67

North Carolina newsletter 71

Pennsylvania newsletter 73

South Carolina newsletter 77

Virginia newsletter 79

West Virginia newsletter 81

Steeplechase newsletter 83

— Evening Stables —

In Memorium 60

Classifieds & Index 85

Looking Back 86

Past Time 88

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June through August 2025

June 21 - Laurel Park

$100,000 BEN'S CAT 3YO & Up, 6 fur., Turf

$100,000 JAMEELA 3YO & Up, Fillies and Mares, 6 fur., Turf

July 12 - Colonial Downs

$125,000 STAR DE NASKRA 3YO, 7 fur.

$125,000 MISS DISCO 3YO, Fillies, 7 fur.

August 16 - Colonial Downs

$125,000 ALL BRANDY 3YO & Up, Fillies and Mares, 1 1/16 miles, Turf

$125,000 FIND 3YO & Up, 1 1/16 miles, Turf

August 23 - Colonial Downs

$125,000 JAMESTOWN 2YO, 5½ fur., Turf

$125,000 DOLLEY MADISON 2YO, Fillies, 5½ fur., Turf

WHEN MARYLAND IS DARK THIS SUMMER

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DEVELOPER & OWNER BONUSES: For registered Maryland-bred horses finishing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in non-restricted overnight races (excluding stakes, certified, or state-bred restricted races) at Colonial Downs and Delaware Park. A $600,000 bonus pool will be divided by the total number of points earned across all eligible races. Each horse's bonus will be calculated based on its total points and will be equally distributed between the Owner(s) and Developer(s). The Developer is defined as the owner at the horse's first career start.

Bonuses will be awarded based on a four-tiered system that assigns points based on Maryland purse equivalents. See Mdhorsemen.com for a point system chart.

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

Volume 33, Issue 6

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LAUREL PARK

JUNE SUMMER STAKES

7 STAKES TOTALING $750,000 IN PURSES OVER THREE WEEKENDS

FIRST RACE 12:10PM

SUN / JUN 15	
THE STORMY BLUES STAKES *Fillies – Three Years Old / 5 and 1/2 Furlongs (Turf)*	$100,000
SAT / JUN 21	
THE BEN'S CAT STAKES REGISTERED MD BRED/MD SIRED AND/OR VA BRED/VA SIRED *Three Year Olds & Upward / 6 Furlongs (Turf)*	$100,000
THE JAMEELA STAKES REGISTERED MD BRED/MD SIRED AND/OR VA BRED/VA SIRED *Fillies & Mares – Three Years Old & Upward / 6 Furlongs (Turf)*	$100,000
SAT / JUN 28	
THE FRANK J. DEFRANCIS MEMORIAL DASH – LISTED *Three Year Olds & Upward / 6 Furlongs*	$150,000
THE DEPUTED TESTAMONY *Three Year Olds & Upward / 1 and 1/8 Miles*	$100,000
THE ALMA NORTH STAKES *Fillies & Mares – Three Years Old & Upward / 6 and 1/2 Furlongs*	$100,000
THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY *Three Year Olds & Upward / 1 and 1/8 Miles (Turf)*	$100,000

PLAY & WIN AT LAUREL PARK

Post Time

MARYLAND MAN. Mindframe (7) gets his nose down in time to win a four-way photo and become a Grade 1 winner in the $1 million Churchill Downs Stakes on Kentucky Derby Day at Churchill Downs May 3. Bred in Maryland by Larry Johnson, Mindframe won for the fourth time in six lifetime starts (with seconds in the Grade 1 Haskell and Belmont). Banishing (2) and Nysos (10) finished in a dead heat for second with New Jersey-bred Book'em Danno (3) fourth and Mullikin fifth in the 1-mile race.

James Johnson (right) and Byron Butler (below) / Coady Media

2
Ford
3
Ford
JEFF RUBY'S
STEAKHOUSE
10
Ford
7
Ford

Say It Again

"He's the most underappreciated Maryland Hunt Cup winner in history."
Outrider Alice Peirce, aboard retiree Derwins Prospector (who won the timber classic in 2017), at My Lady's Manor Races in April

"Anytime he gets a compliment, it makes me so proud."
Outrider Lindy Gutman, aboard retired Maryland Million winner Talk Show Man (who attracted attention) at My Lady's Manor Races in April

"As a jockey, I think it took me five rides to make it to the top of the hill at the Manor."
Trainer Joe Davies, after winning his third Manor as a trainer (he won three as a jockey too); said hill is about halfway through the 3-mile

"Imagine coming all the way here and then your horse won't go across this little bridge. That would be something, wouldn't it?"
Trainer Mark Beecher, as the footsteps of Maryland Hunt Cup runners echoed across a wooden bridge on the way to the paddock at Worthington Farms

Names of the Month

Aft. In the steeplechase program of owner Mason Lampton and trainer Lilith Boucher, the 4-year-old gelding is by Astern (Aus).

Cruise the Nile. Bred in New Jersey owner Hope Jones, the unraced 3-year-old colt is by Cairo Prince out of Party Boat.

Magic Eight Ball. The 4-year-old filly, a winner at Laurel Park April 26 for Madison Avenue Racing Stable, Morris Kernan Jr. and Jamie Ness, is out of Predictress.

Go Figure

1 Person wearing a Quebec Nordiques winter hat at the My Lady's Manor Races in April.

1 Person handing out copies of the United States Constitution at the Grand National Races in April (improbably, the same person who wore the Nordiques hat the prior week).

1 Finisher in the apprentice-jockey timber at the Willowdale Steeplechase May 10. Two of the five starters were eliminated at the second fence. Court Ruler (Ire) fell while leading; Conor Tierney came off Imperial Assassin, who ducked out because of the fall. On the way to the third fence, Imperial Assassin carried Include It off course forcing that one to pull up. Then City of Grace blundered at the 12th fence and sent Virginia Korrell to the turf. Huyana and Elizabeth Scully continued on alone, jumping three fences and galloping in alone to collect the $9,000 payday for EHB Racing and trainer Willie Dowling.

13¼ Lengths in the winning margin of 2024 Maryland-bred Horse of the Year Post Time in his 2025 debut at Laurel Park May 3. Hillwood Stable's star dominated eight others in the allowance, his 10th lifetime win.

RUNNING JUMPING WINNING

Celebrating the Spring Steeplechase Season

With Fueled by The Mill Success!

DOUGLAS LEES PHOTOS

Joe Davies-trained Bogey's Image
wins My Lady's Manor S

Mark Beecher-trained Road to Oz
wins Maryland Hunt Cup

Jack Fisher-trained Keys Discount
wins Virginia Gold Cup

Mark Beecher-trained Eternal Story (Fr)
wins Thomas H. Voss Memorial

Joe Davies-trained Mr. Fine Threads
wins John D. Schapiro Memorial

Jack Fisher-trained Cool Jet (Ire)
wins G1 Commonwealth Cup

Mark Beecher-trained Track And
Trace (Ire) wins GN Maiden Timber

Jack Fisher-trained Mission North
wins Speedy Smithwick Memorial

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Mid-Atlantic-bred Stakes Winners

April 14 – May 5

Maryland-bred

KEYS DISCOUNT, dk.b./br.g., 2019, Medal Count—Divertimento, by Rizzi. B-Bryan Minnich; O-Dolly Fisher; T-Jack Fisher. $30,000 Middleburg Hunt Cup, Middleburg, April 19; $100,000 Virginia Gold Cup, Great Meadow, May 3.

MINDFRAME, dk.b./br.c., 2021, Constitution—Walk of Stars, by Street Sense. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-Repole Stable & St. Elias Stables; T-Todd Pletcher. $900,000 Churchill Downs S-G1, Churchill, May 3.

MISSION NORTH, b.g., 2021, Noble Mission (GB)—Dream Exchange, by Exchange Rate. B/O-Northwoods Stable; T-Jack Fisher. $50,000 Speedy Smithwick Memorial Hurdle S, Great Meadow, May 3.

NINETEENAMENDMENT, dk.b./br.m., 2020, Constitution—Magger Bags, by Indian Charlie. B-Legacy Farm; O-Estate of R. Larry Johnson; T-Mike Trombetta. $100,000 Dahlia S, Laurel, April 19.

ROAD TO OZ, gr./ro.g., 2015, Quality Road—Miz Magician, by Mizzen Mast. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-Daniel Baker; T-Mark Beecher. $100,000 Maryland Hunt Cup S, Glyndon, April 26.

Pennsylvania-bred

FORE HARP, b.g., 2018, Weigelia—Katarica Disco, by Disco Rico. B-St. Omer's Farm; O-LC Racing, James Bonner, Robert Reid Jr; T-Robert Reid Jr. $100,000 King T. Leatherbury S, Laurel, April 19.

West Virginia-bred

ALLFORMENONEFORYOU, ch.f., 2022, Fiber Sonde—Gemini Dream, by Girolamo. B/O-Anthony Croson; T-Cynthia McKee. $75,000 Its Binn Too Long S, Charles Town, April 26.

MENDYS HONEY, b.f., 2021, Mendelssohn—Honey Chile, by Invisible Ink. B-James Miller; O-Ultra Championship Racing; T-Anthony Farrior. $75,000 Original Gold S, Charles Town, April 18.

SOCIAL CHIC, dk.b./br.g., 2018, Upstart—Tres Chic, by Harlan's Holiday. B-James Miller; O-Smart Angle; T-Jeff Runco. $75,000 Confucius Say S, Charles Town, April 19.

JIM MCCUE

Nineteenamendment heads for home in the Dahlia Stakes.

THE RACING BIZ

The Independent Voice for Mid-Atlantic Racing and Breeding

Post Time overwhelms rivals in return: Maryland-bred star Post Time donned blinkers for the first time and laid waste to a Laurel Park allowance field in his 2025 debut. Frank Vepse reports.

MTHA endorses change to claiming price rule: In April, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA) endorsed a less restrictive claiming rule than currently in place.

Stubbornness and support paying off for Lyapustina: After struggling, Maryland-based jockey Tais Lyapustina has begun to get more opportunities. She credits her supportive network – and her own stubbornness. Emily White tells her story.

Banner weekend for breeder Jim Miller: During April's first weekend of stakes action at Charles Town, longtime local breeder Jim Miller was prominent in multiple stakes. Ted Black reports.

The Pianist, The Racetracker, The Dog – Pimlico's Ghosts: Pimlico, a 1-mile dirt oval bounded by generations of our collective memory, serves as the final home for racetrackers, bettors, even a dog, writes Jennifer Kelly.

A tale of two maidens for Romeo, Lionel: One of 'em sold for a song. The other cost $875,000. In one weekend at Laurel Park, though, both Romeo and Lionel debuted in notable fashion, Vespe reports.

"Never Give Up" Benny Havens takes Pimlico feature: Vespe provides an update on 8-year-old Benny Havens, who snapped a 39-race losing streak to win a Pimlico allowance in May.

91st Annual

MHBA

THOROUGHBRED Yearling Show

Sunday, June 29 at 9 a.m.

Judge: TBA

Purse awards totaling $40,000

Horse Show Ring, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium

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Yearling Show Purse awards total $40,000

There are two opportunities to win purse awards with the yearling you show in 2025. A $40,000 MHBA Yearling Show purse will be split and distributed twice: $20,000 will go to the top four money-winners racing as 2-year-olds in 2026* and another $20,000 will be awarded the following year to the four highest-earning 3-year-old performers*.

**all earnings verifiable by The Jockey Club*

Four classes. Maryland-sired colts and geldings; Maryland-sired fillies; out-of-state-sired colts and geldings; out-of-state-sired fillies.

Cash awards. **$1,000** in CASH AWARDS to ribbon winners in each class plus **$1,000** for grand champion, **$500** for reserve champion. Trophies and ribbons in each class. Award of **$100** to the groom of the best turned-out yearling in each class. All entries must be eligible for Maryland-bred registration.

Maryland Million cash awards. The Maryland Million certified yearling earning the highest ribbon in each class will receive **$100.**

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2024 GRAND CHAMPION
Dark Hollow Farm and Hillwood Stable's The Factor colt out of Silver Sides, by Bandbox

Maryland-bred standout Mindframe lands Grade 1

By Joe Clancy

Andrew Motion and Larry Johnson spent a morning at Johnson's Legacy Farm in Bluemont, Va., looking at young horses. They walked fields, checked on mares and foals, evaluated the newcomers as individuals, made loose plans. This one could go to Keeneland. That one might make it to Saratoga. Those two go racing. Timonium for her.

They wrapped up and stood near the barn talking when Motion saw a mare and foal walk across the field a hundred yards away.

"My God Larry, what is that?" Motion asked.

"Oh, that's a Constitution," Johnson replied. "May foal, out of Walk of Stars."

The colt wasn't one Motion, who advised Johnson on young horses and breeding stock off and on for 25 years, needed to see. The colt was just 3 months old and in no hurry to do anything but follow his mother.

The colt was Mindframe.

Three years after that chance sighting, the Maryland-bred is a Grade 1 winner, a millionaire and one of the top racehorses in the country. Motion can't say he saw all that coming, but he knows the youngster looked the part in August 2021 and on subsequent visits to Legacy with Johnson and manager Jonathan Smart. The following summer, the dark bay left for Betz Thoroughbreds in Kentucky – his last step before the Keeneland September yearling sale – and Motion sent Johnson an email dated July 7, 2022.

"Constitution x Walk Of Stars colt: Very attractive, balanced, correct and a very fluid mover. Still a tad immature but carrying good condition. He is a different type from [another colt in the crop] in that he doesn't have the muscular build and backside that colt has but I feel he will develop into a very attractive, slightly later maturing 2/3yo two turn type. He also appears to have a great brain and plenty of class."

At Keeneland, Mindframe sold for $600,000 to Repole Stable and St. Elias Stables.

"I don't think anyone expected him to bring $600,000," Motion said, "but that shows you what good judges are buying for Repole and St. Elias."

Unraced at 2, Mindframe won his debut by 13¾ lengths at Gulfstream Park March 30, 2024, and won a first-level allowance by 7½ on Kentucky Derby Day at Churchill Downs May 4. Off the lopsided wins, trainer Todd Pletcher went deep-sea fishing, and nearly landed two whoppers. Though outgunned in terms of experience, Mindframe finished second to Dornoch in June's Belmont Stakes-G1 and July's Haskell Stakes-G1. The colt missed the rest of his 3-year-old campaign, but emerged this year to win the Gulfstream Park Mile-G2 March 1 and the Churchill Downs Stakes-G1 on this year's Derby Day card at Churchill May 3.

The 7-furlong race, won by Horse of the Year Cody's Wish in 2023, drew a strong field of 11 including Grade 1-winning New Jersey-bred Book'em Danno, Grade 1 winner Mullikin and dual Grade 3 winner Nysos. Fans made the latter the 8-5 favorite, with Mindrame the second choice at 7-2. Giant Mischief put up early fractions of :22.56 and :45.12 as Mindframe eased back to seventh and then eighth. He and Irad Ortiz Jr. swung seven wide at the top of the stretch and won a charge to the finish by a neck over Banishing, who dead-heated for second with Nysos. Book'em Danno was a head behind them in fourth with Mullikin fifth, beaten 1¼ lengths total after 1:22.64.

In six electric starts, Mindframe owns four wins, two seconds (each in Grade 1 company), and $1,292,160 in earnings. He validated the self-made Thoroughbred guts of his breeder.

Johnson, who died in February, bought Mindframe's fourth dam Ran's Chick for $2,400 at Timonium in 1978. She never raced, but she and her daughters are responsible for some of the best horses bred in the Mid-Atlantic since. In addition to Mindframe, active family members go

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***Aug. 9:**	**Festival of Racing**	Special post time of 12:00PM
***Aug. 21:**	**Claiming Crown Preview Day**	Post time of 12:30PM
***Sept. 1:**	**Labor Day Racing**	Post time of 12:30PM
***Sept. 6:**	**Old Dominion Derby Day**	Special post time of 12:00PM

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in all directions and include Grade 2 winner Future Is Now and 2025 Maryland Hunt Cup winner Road to Oz.

"Only Larry Johnson could breed the Maryland Hunt Cup winner and Churchill Downs winner in the same week," said Motion with a laugh. "Larry was a phenomenal breeder of racehorses and knew what he was doing, but sometimes he would say he couldn't see what Jonathan or I could see in them. Larry said to me one day last year, 'You really saw that.' I told him it was hard to miss, but I'll aways remember him saying that. I was always very grateful for the opportunity he gave me."

Motion first worked with Johnson when Legacy stood stallions Two Smart and Prospect Bay, and was periodically brought in to advise on young horses. Four-ish years ago, Johnson called again and Motion started a regular rotation at the farm – visiting at least twice a month, looking at horses and helping make decisions. Johnson's operation had improved in terms of quality, while also growing in quantity. The 20-25 foals born a year couldn't all join the racing stable.

"Larry said that he was getting a little commercial and that he was going to need to send some horses to the sales ring," Motion said. "He was always buying horses, he was all about the deal. He came to me and said, 'I need you to help me keep an eye on things.' Jonathan has a racing background, I've got a young-horse background and it's worked out well."

Mindframe could be headed to the Metropolitan Handicap-G1 this month, or any of a number of major races the rest of the year. His yearling half-brother by Jack Christopher will be headed to a sale. Walk of Stars produced a full-sister to Mindframe last month and was booked to Constitution again.

JOHN GALLAGHER / COADY MEDIA

Mindframe (left) splashed to victory in the Grade 1 Churchill Downs Stakes.

Johnson isn't around to see it, which saddens all at Legacy. But the farm isn't going anywhere. Johnson's daughters Tracy Mulroy and Kelly Caraballo are overseeing the business with the help of Smart, Motion, trainer Mike Trombetta and others. Twenty-one Legacy mares were bred in 2025.

"The thought for the moment is, 'We're in the middle of the foaling season, let's get through some of this and then look at it all again,' " Motion said. "Larry left a list of who was getting bred and who they were going to. Once the foals are on the ground and the mares are back in foal, then we can sit down and evaluate.

"It's unrealistic to think we're going to keep it the size that it is because it's a lot of outlay and a lot of horses. I think we will be thinning out somewhat. Some of that will be natural just because there are some older racehorses in the program, but even Larry talked about trying to decrease the quantity. We will keep the core group for now."

And keep an eye out for another Mindframe. ■

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Milestones

Retired

Millionaire and two-time Maryland-bred champion **Jaxon Traveler**, from a career with at least one stakes win from ages 2-7 for West Point Thoroughbreds and trainer Steve Asmussen. Bred by small-animal veterinarians Drs. Lenny and Pat Pineau from their mare Listen Boy, Jaxon Traveler won 13 races and earned $1,131,643. In 2019 the dark bay son of Munnings sold for $80,000 at Keeneland September as a yearling and the following April brought $140,000 from West Point at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Company's spring sale. Jaxon Traveler won all three starts in 2020, topped by the Maryland Juvenile Futurity in December, to capture the Maryland-bred 2-year-old male crown. As a 3-year-old, he won Oaklawn Park's Bachelor Stakes in May and Pimlico's Star de Naskra in August. He became a graded stakes winner in 2022 with a hometown score in the Maryland Sprint-G3 on the Preakness Stakes-G1 undercard at Pimlico. Last year, he won five of nine starts, capped by the Whitmore-G3 at Oaklawn, while earning $401,799. He opened 2025 by winning the Ft. Bliss Stakes at Sunland Park in January, but finished seventh in the Whitmore and fifth in an allowance at Lone Star Park in April. Over his career, Jaxon Traveler started at 13 racetracks in Maryland, Arkansas, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Iowa, Texas and Toronto, Canada, while winning over anyone connected to him. "We want barnfulls of Jaxon Traveler," said West Point's Dawn Lenert. "He meant so much to everybody on our team and our partners. Even people who didn't own him cheered for him and loved him. We're sad to see him go, but you want them to go out like this – sound and healthy." Lenert said Jaxon Traveler was drawing some interest from stud farms, but a deal had not been completed by mid-May. A daughter of After Market bred in Maryland and raced by Sagamore Farm, Listen Boy was purchased by the Pineaus for $26,000 in 2015. Her foals include five winners in addition to Jaxon Traveler.

Moved

To be part of the Maryland 5 Star three-day event at Fair Hill in Maryland this fall, the **Real Rider Cup** charity show-jumping contest. The Maryland portion of the event (a Kentucky version goes June 28) will remain on the grounds of the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area, but will shift in date and be hosted at the Fair Hill Special Event Zone, joining the official schedule of events at the Maryland 5 Star following the conclusion of the cross-country phase of competition Saturday, Oct. 18. Founded by Anita Motion in 2017, the Real Rider Cup has raised more than $600,000 for Thoroughbred aftercare while increasing awareness and fostering a spirit of collaboration and community between the racing, aftercare, and equestrian industries. Aboard off-track Thoroughbreds and wearing the racing silks of their colleagues, employers or other connections, participating riders pledge to raise $1,000 for Real Rider Cup beneficiaries and tackle a show-jumping course, riding for fast, clean rounds. Awards are given for individual and team results, as well as top fundraisers. Riders from across industries are welcome and encouraged. Past riders have included Olympians, champion jockeys, outriders, members of the racing press, veterinarians, exercise riders, representatives of breeding farms and corporate track management and more. For more, see therealridercup.com.

Received

A $50,000 grant from the Cassiopeia Foundation, owner of the Foxfield steeplechase racecourse near Charlottesville, Va., **Camp Holiday Trails**, a year-round nonprofit camp for children with medical needs. The grant strengthens the connection between one of central Virginia's equestrian traditions and an organization that has served thousands of children and families for more than 50 years. First run in 1977, the Foxfield Races are held each spring and fall and showcase steeplechase racing and a connection

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Milestones

to the community while raising funds for non-profits Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville and Camp Holiday Trails. In addition to its grant, Cassiopeia Foundation matched direct donations made by individuals purchasing tickets to the spring races to help ensure Camp Holiday Trails continues to provide inclusive, medically-supportive camp experiences at little or no cost to families across Virginia and beyond. "Foxfield has always been about more than racing," said Cassiopeia Foundation's Sara Miller. "It's about neighbors supporting neighbors. We are so grateful to have the ability to extend the reach of the race committee this year and beyond through the Foxfield Land Preservation initiative. Since the acquisition, our team has spent a great deal of time researching the property's history and developing a complete understanding of founder Mariann de Tejeda's vision. I am pleased to say that exciting things are ahead."

Approved

By the Maryland Board of Public Works in May, nearly $19 million to advance the **Pimlico Plus** plan of rebuilding Baltimore's Pimlico Race Course and establishing a new training center at Shamrock Farm in Woodbine. Comprised of Gov. Wes Moore, the chair; state treasurer Dereck Davis; and state comptroller Brooke Lierman, the board signed off on a $14.3-million agreement with Clark Construction for demolition, abatement, and general requirements for the Pimlico racing facility; and nearly $4.5 million to purchase 328 acres of Shamrock to serve as the future training center. "The centralization of racing operations at Pimlico will serve to revitalize Maryland's horse industry, an industry that, by the way, supports over 28,000 jobs and generates roughly $3 billion in economic activity," Moore said. "We are excited to write this next chapter of Thoroughbred racing in the state of Maryland." Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA) President Katy Voss said in a statement, "This is a win-win for Maryland racing and for Carroll County. It's an investment by the state not only in the future of our industry, but in the preservation of agricultural land and the economic vitality of the region. This training center lays the groundwork for a stronger, more sustainable future for everyone involved in Maryland racing." The board approval was a late step in the work of the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority, which will close June 30. Starting July 1, The Maryland Stadium Authority will undertake the building of the two projects, and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation will oversee the operations of the new Maryland Jockey Club. The General Assembly approved up to $400 million in bonds to support the projects. The May meeting showcased renderings of a new Pimlico, which included a clubhouse design modeled on the original Pimlico clubhouse which burned in 1966. "The architecture of the clubhouse is inspired by the grand Baltimore landmarks such as the Rawlings Conservatory in Druid Hill Park and the original Pimlico clubhouse," Maryland Stadium Authority chairman Craig Thompson said. "Features of this include a colonnade and rooftop balconies, which are a nod to the porches of the original clubhouse."

Approved

By the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority in May, members of the **board of directors of the new Maryland Jockey Club**, the nonprofit created to operate Maryland's mile Thoroughbred racetracks. "I believe that we have assembled an incredibly diverse group of individuals with diverse talents, with deep industry experience representing all constituent interests in the Thoroughbred industry," said MTROA chairman Greg Cross. "This group also possesses a wealth of business and financial knowledge that will be invaluable as they chart the future course in Maryland racing." The members of the nonprofit board approved are: Jim Dresher, a breeder and owner

Milestones

of Glenangus Farm; Tim Keefe, a trainer and former president of the state's horsemen's group, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association; Chuck Tildon, a member of the MTROA board and former member of the Maryland Racing Commission; Lisa Hofstetter, vice-president of Northview Stallion Station; Mike Hopkins, former executive director of the Maryland Racing Commission; TK Kuegler, a venture capitalist and owner of Wasabi Ventures Stables; Jeff Cherry, a Baltimore-based entrepreneur and investor; Dr. Kathleen Anderson, a veterinarian based at Fair Hill; and Mike Hankin, a breeder and owner, and co-CEO of the Baltimore-based investment management and strategic advisory firm Brown Advisory.

Won

The 1,000th race of his training career, West Virginia-based conditioner **Tim Grams**, when new stable star Moonlit Notion prevailed in the $75,000 Coin Collector Stakes at Charles Town May 10. Grams came into the night needing two wins to reach the milestone, and made it to 999 when Judgement Day scored in the fourth race. The Divining Rod homebred for Grams and his wife Judy scored by a neck over stablemate Prospective Love. Four races later, Moonlit Notion won by 2¾ lengths. A son of Maryland stallion Great Notion, Moonlit Notion paid $2.20

BARBARA D. LIVINGSTON

(to win, place and show) while extending his winning streak to six – five this year. Grams saddled his first runners in 1996, winning his first race with Devil's Cape at Penn National, and has expanded the stable to one of the state's most successful. In 2024, Grams won 63 races, second to his 64 tallies in 2009. Career standouts include Charles Town Classic-G2 winner Runnin'toluvya and Moonlit Notion's stakes-winning dam Moonlit Song.

Voted

Into Thoroughbred racing's national Hall of Fame, Pennsylvania-bred **Smarty Jones**. The Kentucky Derby-G1 and Preakness Stakes-G1 winner, on the ballot for the first time, was the lone selection in the contemporary category and will

Milestones

be joined by historic racehorses Decathlon and Hermis, historic trainer George H. Conway and pillars of the turf Ed Bowen, Arthur Hancock III and Richard Ten Broeck. As it is each year, the ceremony is open to the public and free to attend, commencing at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Aug. 1 at the Fasig-Tipton sales pavilion in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Bred by Roy and Pat Chapman's Someday Farm, Smarty Jones raced from 2003 through 2004, won eight of nine starts, and was voted the Eclipse Award for champion 3-year-old male in 2004. Raced by the Chapmans, the son of Elusive Quality and the Smile mare I'll Get Along was trained by John Servis and ridden by Stewart Elliott. The chestnut colt won his first two starts at Philadelphia Park (now Parx Racing) in November 2003 – a maiden special weight and the Pennsylvania Nursery Stakes – by a combined 22¾ lengths. He began his road to the Kentucky Derby with a victory in the Count Fleet Stakes at Aqueduct in January 2004 before advancing to Oaklawn Park's series of Derby preps in Arkansas. Smarty Jones won the Southwest and Rebel Stakes before punching his ticket to Churchill Downs with a victory in the Arkansas Derby-G2. On May 1, 2004, Smarty Jones became the first undefeated Kentucky Derby winner since Seattle Slew in 1977 with a victory over Lion Heart before a crowd of 140,054 at Churchill Downs. Smarty Jones also became the second Pennsylvania-bred to win the Derby, joining Lil E. Tee (1992). Two weeks after his Derby victory, Smarty Jones romped by a record margin 11½ lengths in the Preakness at Pimlico Race Course with 124,351 in attendance. A Belmont Park record 120,139 fans were on hand for a potential Triple Crown sweep in the Belmont Stakes-G1, but Birdstone pulled off the upset, defeating Smarty Jones by a length. Though plans called for a summer campaign, Smarty Jones was retired that summer with a record of 8-1-0 from nine starts and earnings of $7,613,155 (including a $5 million bonus from Oaklawn). He won his eight races by a combined 47½ lengths. Smarty Jones, 24, is still active as a stallion standing at Equistar Training and Breeding in Annville, Pa. Decathlon raced from 1955-57, winning 25 of his 42 starts and earning $269,530. He won 18 stakes and two sprint championships. Trained by Rollie Shepp for Robert Dienst's River Divide Farm, the son of Olympia won at nine racetracks including New Jersey's Atlantic City, Garden State and Monmouth Park. Hermis raced from 1901-05, winning 28 races from 55 starts for several owners and trainers. As a 3-year-old in 1903 he won the Travers Stakes and Saranac Handicap at Saratoga. Other highlights included victories in the Suburban Handicap and four victories while carrying 132 pounds or more. A New Jersey native, Conway trained Triple Crown winner and Hall of Famer War Admiral, Hall of Famer Crusader and other stars Speed Boat, War Glory and War Hero. A West Virginia native, Bowen was a racing historian and journalist for more than 60 years, editing *The BloodHorse* magazine, authoring 22 books and chairing the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame nominating committee from 1987-2024. After leaving *The BloodHorse*, he was president of the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation from 1994-2018. A member of one of racing's most prominent families, Hancock established Kentucky's Stone Farm in 1970 and bred, raised or raced such standouts as Kentucky Derby winner Gato Del Sol, Derby and Preakness winner (and Hall of Famer) Sunday Silence, Preakness and Belmont winner Risen Star and Derby winner Fusaichi Pegasus. Ten Broeck was one of American racing's most prominent figures in the 19th century, as an owner, breeder, racetrack owner and international racing pioneer. The Albany, N.Y., native owned tracks in Louisiana and Alabama and raced top racehorse, influential stallion and Hall of Famer Lexington. Ten Broeck later raced horses successfully in England, winning the 1858 Cesarewitch Stakes with Prioress (the first horse bred and owned by an American to win in England).

Grand Master: Reid gets to 1,000 training wins

Butch Reid gave himself three years to make it when he went out on his own in 1985. He was a University of Maryland graduate who had worked in the private sector for a few years, so he knew he had something to fall back on if he could not establish himself as a successful Thoroughbred trainer.

"Forty years later, here I am," said Reid, who reached a milestone April 28 when Jeanne Marie won the ninth race at Parx Racing, giving Reid 1,000 career wins.

"It was a long time in coming," said Reid, a South Jersey native who has never strayed too far in becoming a staple in the Mid-Atlantic who must be taken seriously when he ships, especially to New York. "It's a credit to all the people who have been with me all these years, my help, my wife [and assistant, Ginny]. It's very gratifying."

Reid walked hots and worked as a groom for Dickie Dutrow Sr., following in the footsteps of his brother, Mark, a former leading trainer at Keystone, a precursor to Parx. Butch took charge of his brother's operation at Monmouth Park, liked the idea of running the show, and went out on his own. His first win came Sept. 6, 1985, at the Meadowlands with New Jersey-bred Rock Lives.

A staple at Parx, where he was inducted into the track's Hall of Fame in 2021, Reid is an embodiment of the idea that there are many trainers who can be successful when given the opportunity to train a good horse.

Reid won the 2020 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies-G1 with Vequist, champion 2-year-old filly. Poseidon's Warrior took the Grade 1 Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap at Saratoga in 2012. Afleet Again won the 2011 Breeders' Cup Marathon-G2. In addition to Vequist, Neecie Marie, Smooth B and Morning Matcha eclipsed $1 million in earnings, with the latter two active.

The horse who delivered the 1,000th win is a stakes winner owned by Glenn Bennett's LC Racing and Chuck Zacney's Cash is King, appropriate considering the success Reid has enjoyed with those owners.

"That's a big accomplishment and I'm really happy he won on one of mine and Chuck's horses," Bennett said. "Butch and Ginny have done a fantastic job and I'm very fortunate to be hooked up with them"

Reid picked up win 1,001 May 12 and 1,002 May 13. That private sector job can keep waiting.

– Paul Halloran

Butch Reid (sunglasses) celebrates his 1,000th win as a trainer.

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— Next Chapters —

BY MAGGIE KIMMITT

Badleroibrown

KATHERINE HAY

Badleroibrown and Megan Jones have had a special connection since his racing days more than a decade ago.

He has no connection to King Kong or a junkyard dog, but he does have close ties to the winner of Kentucky Derby 137. Family ties, in fact. Badleroibrown and Animal Kingdom, both foals of 2008 by Leroidesanimaux (Brz), were bred and campaigned by Barry Irwin's Team Valor International.

Older than Animal Kingdom by six weeks, Badleroibrown is the first foal from the Western Winter mare Ginger Sea (SAf).

Irwin set both chestnut colts on the same path to the races. Raised at the Bandoroff family's Denali Stud in Paris, Ky., they learned early lessons from former Wayne Lukas

assistant Randy Bradshaw at his breaking and training facility in Williston, Fla.

In his book *Derby Innovator – the Making of Animal Kingdom*, Irwin wrote about the initial impressions of the youngsters.

"Randy Bradshaw told me at the end of the year that Animal Kingdom was improving in his hind-end strength and that he was a big colt who was definitely 'worth trying.' I could see he had the tools to develop into a grand looking 3-year-old. Being able to get him to the races at 2, however, seemed highly unlikely.

"All Randy Bradshaw wanted to talk about that winter well into spring was Badleroibrown, Badleroibrown and more Badleroibrown. He was completely enthralled by the colt."

Bradshaw wasn't alone. Megan Jones joined Team Valor in an administrative role in January 2009, progressing to director of client relations in 2010 and vice president in 2013. After leaving Team Valor in 2016, Jones founded Arnmore Thoroughbreds, whose runners include graded stakes winners Poppy Flower and Gala Brand.

Jones met Badleroibrown the day after the Breeders' Cup in 2010, the year Blame fought off Zenyatta in the Classic at Churchill Downs. The colt had finished second in his debut on Halloween, eight days after Animal Kingdom broke his maiden at Keeneland.

"They were stabled side by side," Jones said of the Wayne Catalano trainees. "Animal Kingdom was such a ham, and Badleroibrown was actually the talking horse at the time. Robby Albarado was riding both of them, and he said Leroi had a lot of ability."

The Team Valor horses were transferred to Graham Motion for the 2011 season, and Irwin purchased a barn at Fair Hill Training Center in Maryland. While 2010 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf-G1 winner Pluck was considered the stable star, Animal Kingdom rose to the top as Triple Crown season approached.

"Animal Kingdom became the 'people's horse' that spring," Jones said. "Leroi didn't have a large partnership so he didn't have many visitors, so I think he kind of came to think that I was his owner."

While Badleroibrown had talent, he developed wind problems which kept him away from the races for more than a year. He returned in December 2011 and broke his maiden at Gulfstream Park in February 2012.

"At some point after that, they started using him as a workmate for Animal Kingdom," said Jones. "Even with his air, he could still breeze."

> "He'll go bridle-less for me. He loves to go without tack. I think any sense of having no control over him actually calms him down. You either need no bridle and saddle or a good bit of bridle."
>
> *– Megan Jones, about Badleroibrown*

Badleroibrown could outwork pretty much everything in the barn. Animal Kingdom became the first horse to get the better of him in the morning, and that was no easy feat.

"Barry very kindly did that instead of dropping him down for a tag, because Leroi didn't seem to be enjoying what he was doing," Jones said. "Animal Kingdom would inhale his workmates, but not Leroi, so that alleviated destroying the confidence of every other racehorse in the barn. Leroi was his workmate leading up to the Breeders' Cup Mile in 2012 where he was an awesome second to Wise Dan coming off a big layoff."

After that 2012 season (ending with one start for a $30,000 claiming tag), Irwin retired Badleroibrown, gave him to Jones and shipped him to her family's farm in Darlington, S.C. He had won once, and placed four times, in 10 starts and earned $49,077.

"Leroi was a pretty tough horse, he was strong on the track. And that was kind of the point – I wanted to be sure that he landed in a good spot," Jones said. "With him I don't think it was ever going to be a matter of how much retraining he had, he was always a lot of horse and still is to this day.

"I think I learned so much from him about riding hot and stronger horses, and that helped me with retraining other horses later and even getting on horses at the farm that were still racing. It helped my horsemanship and creativity a lot."

Twelve years later, Badleroibrown's retirement has been full of adventures. As Jones followed the racing circuits from Florida to New York, the gelding went along. Home in South Carolina was always the halfway point traveling north or south.

"He's just so highly intelligent. He's so gentle for children. When he's been in South Carolina, he's been the first horse

most of my friends' kids have ridden," Jones said. "Kids or puppies, he loves everything small and cute and has always been so trustworthy. One of my friend's daughters was only so tall she could only brush his legs, and he would stand there and pick up his feet for her. But with adults, he totally knows the difference.

"He'll go bridle-less for me. He loves to go without tack. I think any sense of having no control over him actually calms him down. You either need no bridle and saddle or a good bit of bridle."

An ace as a trail horse – Jones calls him "the bravest horse I've ever been on" – he has introduced dozens of transitioning Thoroughbreds to the wonders of the woods. But Badleroibrown is in his element at the beach and especially in the water, and the farm is about an hour's drive to the South Carolina coast. Myrtle Beach State Park and Garden City beach are favorite destinations.

Badleroibrown attends family cookouts and barbecues, no lead shank, just chilling with the guests. He's among the group around the firepit. A few photos even show him at the front door with his head looking into the entrance hall.

"He'd definitely come into the house if we let him," she said.

Jones sees the horse's most important role as that of a healer; an equine empath, if you will. His instincts are infallible, and he seems to sense what other horses require in any situation.

"If horses are with him for rehabs or breaks, he definitely thinks that they are his projects," Jones said. "He really stewards them along. You can turn any horse that's coming off the track out with him, whether you're going to retrain them or they're going back to the races, and he knows exactly what they need. He knows if they need confidence or if they need play. He's especially good with horses that are retiring; he can help them figure out the transition. And I think he thinks that I'm his project too . . . and maybe even that I work for him."

While Jones is settled in at Saratoga until September, Badleroibrown is relaxing on a farm in Fair Hill as both recover from surgeries during this past year. The separation has been the longest in their history, and Jones is anxious for their reunion this fall when she heads south.

"For me, he's my soulmate horse; my heart horse," she said. "There's no other horse like him. I just can't wait to have him back with me. I've had him for part of my 20s and 30s. You know he's like that good dog that you have for those years of your life that are all encompassing. He's been there for everything. One day, I've always wanted to have a farm in Kentucky. Hopefully when he's in his 20s and 30s we'll be settled in one place." ■

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— From the editor —

BY JOE CLANCY

Walk of Ages

Pimlico Race Course. Baltimore, Maryland. Preakness Day. Late afternoon after the 11th race, well before the 12th and nearly two hours before Journalism wins the Preakness itself.

Take a walk.

Start in the paddock. Yes, it's loud, confined, a touch kooky, but it's Pimlico's paddock and when it's full of Preakness horses it feels like an NHL locker room before game seven. Champagne drinkers toast on the right, just outside the women's jockeys' room, lead ponies chill in the skinny stalls, a security guard slides the metal pipe back to let you out. Say thank you. Go left and up the ramp to the clubhouse. Same place it's always been, clean and dirty at the same time. Make a lap. People line up to look through the windows into the paddock (it'll be 20 minutes before the horses get there), others gather in pockets near central pillars, still more watch small televisions, a few cash tickets at the mutuel windows. Make a loop and go out the way you came.

And now head past the paddock again. Stop and talk with some Falls Road Running Club members, vow to come back for the Tavern Run on Super Bowl Sunday. There's the photo room. Legends used to develop film and make prints of other legends in there. It's all computerized now, but the feeling remains. Imagine how much Jim McCue is going to miss that place.

Hello, grandstand. Dodge the guy selling black-eyed Susan drinks in souvenir glasses, bend right, then left. To the right, the floor slopes up to the doors to the track apron, which then slopes down to the track – one of racing's great phenomena. Betting windows line the left side. The floor shines, still. How many times has it been buffed? Televisions hang high. Four people sit on a straight plastic bench; others cluster on a circular wooden seat around a pole; still more gather on plastic chairs linked by metal frames. Somewhere, a used-to-be-new tote board flashes lightbulbs. Pass the ice-cream stand, which also sells iced coffee for $5. Head for the Hilltop Eatery sign in all its mid-century modern glory. A padded office chair looks out of place at a round-top table, but shouts comfort. Resist the urge.

The path narrows. Head under the Division 3B sign. Ponder what that means, for a second anyway. For reference, you're about a furlong from the finish line, headed toward the top of the stretch.

And whoa, everything is different. Welcome to the OG part of an old-school racetrack. Though you're inside, there's a breeze to your left and another in your face. To the right, signs warn "Limited Access. Closed to Public." Those passageways used to send patrons to seats in the wooden grandstand over your head, where fans of Venezuela's wonder horse Canonero II stomped and banged and sang their horse to victory in

ECLIPSE SPORTSWIRE

1971. People haven't sat up there in years. The building stands, but nobody goes in. All the action is underneath or out front.

The mutuel bays appear devoid of human tellers, but self-serve machines get some attention. Do they work? Signs from a bygone era advertise "Programs, Racing Forms, Tip Cards." Fans walk in all directions – coming, going, looking, seeking, talking, snapping, vibing. Some drink. Some eat. All look sharp though the attire spans silk-screened suits and cutoff jeans, silk blouses and Tom Matte Colts T-shirts, fancy hats and backward O's caps (you know they fired the manager today?). A SWAT officer walks by, like he stepped out of a Rambo sequel. Somebody asks for a photo.

The grandstand ends. Step outside into real daylight and everything changes again. To the right, infielders access the tunnel – more departures than arrivals at this point. To the left, calm but stern Baltimore Police Department officers stand behind metal bike racks. To their left, anger bubbles over in one guy. He wants in, doesn't have the right ticket, keeps on talking. An officer who worked the last "wild" infield, says to nobody, "This is tame, believe me."

Beyond the people, on a sandy uphill horse path, 10 horses wait. They'll contest the $250,000 Dinner Party Stakes shortly. Imagine their thoughts. "Most races generate less hubbub than a library at midnight . . . why all the commotion for this one?" Fort Washington will win for trainer Shug McGaughey, whose assistant Anthony Hamilton used to be a Preakness partier. Now he's part of the reason for the party.

Leave the horses, tell the cops you won't repeat anything terrible, and wander in front of that old grandstand toward the finish line. This must be what sailing past a decommissioned lighthouse feels like. Once important, the oldest portion of the Pimlico grandstand offers little more than shade and people use it all as the shadows creep toward the track. To the left, folding chairs are scattered like leaves in October. Vendors hawk cans of Stella and Guinness, raspberry White Claws and whatever else floats in tubs of icy water. Keep walking, turn around when you hit a dead end at a bar and duck inside the newer but still old grandstand. Ride the escalator up, turn left and venture outside.

Welcome to the second floor, home of fresher air, more shade, box seats that haven't changed owners in decades. It's the 150th Preakness. One of the first people you see sports a Preakness 100 tie. "Can't you see Dad grabbing this that year?" says the wearer. Talk the state of media with a radio guy. Talk the state of racing with a horsewoman. Pose for a photo. Laugh at the absurdity of a musical act giving a concert while facing away from most of the people at the event. Keep walking, stay outside despite ushers opening doors, dodge punters returning from the windows with their tickets. No, you don't need a black-eyed Susan. Say hello to some Kentuckians, turn left, walk through the Preakness horsemen's boxes and turn right down the staircase to ground level. Make a right, go through the doors, down the slope away from the track, left, left again and – once the guard slides back the pipe and you say thank you – you're back in the paddock.

The walk took 30 minutes and 12.83 seconds, and felt like forever.

Thanks, Pimlico. For everything. ■

Road to Oz sails the 13th fence.

The Steeplechase Times

MARYLAND HUNT CUP

Big Fences, Big Moment

MARYLAND-BRED ROAD TO OZ SOARS IN TIMBER CLASSIC

By Joe Clancy ■ Photographs by Douglas Lees

Walking from the barn to the paddock at the Maryland Hunt Cup, Mark Beecher looked to his left at the third fence – one of the most challenging obstacles in the racing world.

"Jesus, that's a big fence," said Beecher, who tried not to but stole a second glance while pondering his three runners in the $100,000 timber race at Worthington Farms near Glyndon April 26. "When I was riding, I didn't think they were that big at all. Now that I'm training, they look a lot bigger."

Therein lies one of the many rubs of the Maryland Hunt Cup, North America's oldest steeplechase. First run in 1894, the race makes jockeys talk themselves into thinking it's easy while forcing trainers to recognize how difficult it is.

Twice a winner as a jockey, Beecher won his first as a trainer when Road to Oz rallied from fourth with two fences remaining to catch 2023 winner Withoutmoreado (Ire) in the final yards of the 4-mile, 22-fence test. Ridden by Conor Tierney, owner Dan Baker's Maryland-bred scored by three-quarters of a length in 8:19.20 – the third-fastest Hunt Cup in history. Beecher trainee Goodoldtimes (Ire) finished third for the second consecutive year, followed by early leader Monbeg Stream (Ire), 2024 winner Blackhall (Ire) and Beecher runner Rocket Star Red. Mr. Fine Threads fell at the 16th fence. Queens Empire (Ire) lost his jockey with a mistake at the eighth and Great Road fell at the second.

Beecher joined an exclusive group of Hunt Cup-winning jockeys to also accomplish the feat as trainers after retiring from the saddle. The Irishman turned Marylander felt the impact while fighting off tears – some anyway – afterward.

"I never, never cry in my life, I don't know, it just hits you hard," he said. "I've won it as a rider, but I think this just means so much more because you're with them every day as a trainer. I know everything about them, every little thing that went right for them to get here. I know what can go wrong and I know how much work it takes."

Beecher's work with Road to Oz began nearly six years ago.

Bred by Larry Johnson and trained by Mike Trombetta through seven starts (one win) on the flat, the son of Quality Road was claimed for $16,000 by Kieron Magee in May 2019. Five months and five races later, Magee dropped the gray gelding to $5,000 and Beecher and father-in-law Henry Walters won a four-way shake to land a steeplechase prospect.

Beecher got the 4-year-old home to Harford Hill Farm in Monkton, told himself, "This is a nice horse," and taught him to jump hurdles. Road to Oz emerged eight months later in a waiver maiden claimer at the Virginia Gold Cup. Beecher didn't think his horse could lose.

"Nothing will get this fella beat today," he said. Road to Oz apparently took it as a taunt, stumbled while making a move at the top of the stretch and lost jockey Sean McDermott. At Middleburg that October, Road to Oz lost a shoe and was pulled up.

Baker and Beecher talked things over at the end of the season.

"What do you think this guy is?" Baker asked.

"He'll break his maiden over hurdles," Beecher replied.

"Then what?"

"He'll make a nice timber horse."

The Road to Oz team filled the winner's wagon and included (from left) Tim Beecher, Tina Walters, Marian Beecher, Conor Tierney, Alec Baker, MyDanh Baker, Laya Tron Baker, Pat Baker, Dan Baker, Áine Beecher, Rebecca Beecher holding Lucy, Mark Beecher holding Owen.

Baker came up with one more question. "Why don't we just go right to timber now?"

And Road to Oz was a timber horse.

He won his debut at My Lady's Manor in April 2021 (the first timber winner for future champion jockey Graham Watters), finished third in stakes company at Middleburg in May, placed sixth in the Virginia Gold Cup and returned in November to win an allowance at the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup. He ran twice in 2022, highlighted by a win in the Maryland Grand National in April, but sat out the 2023 season with a tendon injury.

"It was a very small, bit of a tendon but I know a small tendon is like being a little bit pregnant," Beecher said. "We could have brought him back for a fall campaign in 2023. I just thought we should give him the time."

After a third in the Manor and a second in the Grand National last year, Beecher thought about the Hunt Cup but talked himself out of it.

"I've minded him and minded him and minded him, and even last year I asked myself, 'Should I come here?' " he said. "We just didn't have enough. I didn't think we had enough."

After jumping around stiff courses in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, Road to Oz could have run. Beecher, who rode Professor Maxwell to victory in 2013 (after jumping several fences without stirrups) and partnered Raven's Choice to victory (by disqualification) in 2015, didn't see a finished product. When Beecher thinks about running a horse in the Hunt Cup, he asks a simple question: "Would I ride them?"

Last year the answer was no.

This year? Off another season of work, and thirds at Green Spring Point-to-Point and in the apprentice race at the Manor, Road to Oz was ready.

"I just took my time with him and just made sure it was the right time," said Beecher, who bypassed a more traditional Hunt Cup prep in the Manor itself or Grand National. "The year he won the Grand National, I ran him at Cheshire as a prep race and it took him about three weeks to get over it. He was fine physically; he was just tired. He came right for the Grand National and won it, but last year I didn't want to try the Hunt Cup after a race that close."

Count Beecher among the group of Maryland timber trainers who think horses need to try the Grand National before the Hunt Cup, but he doesn't necessarily feel like it must come in the same year. The races are a week apart, a schedule that can take a toll.

Road to Oz gallops out with a Maryland Hunt Cup, the first Maryland-bred winner since 2015.

"He gave his stifle a bit of whack at the Grand National last year, and I was thinking to myself I know he can jump the Grand National and I didn't need to go back there this year to prove that," Beecher said. "I looked at the Manor to get me to the Hunt Cup. Good trainers, if they have a plan, they work backward."

Beecher grew up in Ireland riding show horses and hunters – he won a European show-jumping championship as a junior, twice – and uses that background to put his steeplechasers through their paces.

"I have an old show-jump exercise I put them through, an exercise I've always done with the horses that go to the Hunt Cup," he said. "It's an easy five stride and distance exercise that allows the horse to use their own head to do it. One day I'll have it as a longer distance, and the next day I'll shorten it, but I'll ride it the same to get them to use their eye."

The goal is to teach horses to figure out jumping questions for themselves and not always rely on the rider.

"I don't even let the jockeys ride them," Beecher said. "I ride them myself because if it goes wrong, it's on me. It went right with him."

So did the race.

Run in memory of Perry Bolton, who won three times as an owner, and Janon Fisher III, who won three times as a jockey, the 2025 Hunt Cup attracted nine entrants. Blackhall and English amateur Charlie Marshall returned off their upset, the horse's only lifetime win, in 2024. He'd been beaten 95½ (don't forget the half) lengths a week ear-

Action at the third fence: Monbeg Stream (top) shows the way over (bottom, from left) Road to Oz, Rocket Star Red, Goodoldtimes, Withoutmoreado and Blackhall.

lier at Butler. A Hunt Cup upsetter with Tierney two years ago, Withoutmoreado partnered with top amateur Freddie Procter and came in off a fifth at Cheshire and a fourth in the Manor. Third last year, Goodoldtimes and 2021 Hunt Cup winner Dan Nevin returned off a late-running second in the Grand National. Supplemented by trainer Leslie Young, 2023 Grand National winner Monbeg Stream shook off some rust with a second (ahead of Road to Oz) at the Manor. Rocket Star Red made his fifth Hunt Cup try at 13. Maryland-bred Mr. Fine Threads teamed up with top English amateur Will Biddick. Hunt Cup rookies Queens Empire and Great Road completed the lineup.

A fractious Queens Empire and Virginia Korrell got left at the start as Monbeg Stream galloped to the front despite clipping a board at the first fence. Great Road fell at the second, but everyone else crossed Tufton Avenue and made it over the 4-foot-9 third as Monbeg Stream led Withoutmoreado, followed by Road to Oz, Goodoldtimes, Blackhall and Rocket Star Red. The field spread out after the sixth, another 4-foot-9 test, and Monbeg Stream built his advantage to 10 lengths by the eighth fence. Withoutmoreado continued second with Road to Oz and Goodoldtimes handling third and fourth. Queens Empire mangled that fence, pitching Korrell over his head to the turf.

Monbeg Stream leads the pack away from the 12th and headed toward the 13th. Road to Oz (center) stalks the leaders.

Two miles into the race, Monbeg Stream left from way back and flew the 12th. Withoutmoreado did the same. Behind them, four horses jumped in the same stride and broke two posts as the rails collapsed. Monbeg Stream wasn't quite as brave at the 13th, companion to the mighty third, but landed with a comfortable lead over Withoutmoreado, Blackhall and Road to Oz. Blackhall advanced to second over the 14th, inside Withoutmoreado. Jordan Canavan asked for and received a big leap from Monbeg Stream at the 16th – an uphill, 4-foot-10 beast nearly 3 miles into the race. Mr. Fine Threads fell there while last of seven.

At that test and others around the sprawling course, Road to Oz simply jumped and galloped – nothing spectacular, but nothing on the verge of trouble either.

"I was always very happy with my position," said Tierney. "He traveled so comfortably. He's such an easy ride. He just loves his job. He loves jumping, loves running. I just had to steer him around."

Monbeg Stream built his lead back to double digits approaching the 17th fence as the others bunched together as if to muster a rally. The leader finally showed a hint of tiredness with a twisting leap at the 19th, but turned the corner and steamed to the downhill 20th. Withoutmoreado took up the chase in second as Blackhall weakened and Road to Oz revved up.

The smallest fence on the course, the 21st at 2-foot-11, can catch horses off guard with a small creek on its landing side but all handled it well. Monbeg Stream spent the most time in the air and halfway to the 22nd and final fence had no answer for Withoutmoreado's challenge. Behind them, Road to Oz kept finding.

Withoutmoreado pricked his ears and sized up the last with a 2-length lead. He got in a little tight. Road to Oz met it longer and landed with more momentum. Head low, neck flat, he pulled even about halfway through the stretch and swept past as Tierney raised his right fist and punched the air. The first two were 15 lengths clear of Goodoldtimes, who had 2 lengths on a steadfast if worn out Monbeg Stream.

"I threw absolutely everything at him," said Tierney of the stretch run to catch a horse he used to ride. "I was always pretty sure when I jumped the last I was going to catch him because he's such a tough, honest horse. He'd try his heart out for you."

Days after the race, Beecher got a chance to watch the video replay and admired his horse's performance even more.

The Maryland Hunt Cup jockeys of 2025 (from left): Will Biddick, Charlie Marshall, Dan Nevin, Conor Tierney, Jordan Canavan, Virginia Korrell, Teddy Davies, Freddie Proctor, Brett Owings.

"He did it within himself," Beecher said. "He never looked under pressure jumping which is what really won him the race. I watched him shorten up to the 16th and he popped his shoulder like a show jumper. I remember the 16th just being a monster when I was riding. He looked like it was no problem."

Road to Oz won for the fourth time in 11 timber starts and pushed his steeplechase earnings to $119,600. As a Maryland-bred, the $60,000 Hunt Cup payday swelled an additional $13,500 to Baker (plus an identical breeder bonus to the Johnston estate). The payday meant more than money to Baker, who came to his first Hunt Cup as a teenager and attended the 1974 race with his future wife Pat. They fox-hunted with Green Spring Valley and still ride out with the Mt. Carmel Hounds, own Holwood Farm in Upperco, Md., and enjoyed every second of the 2025 Hunt Cup.

"What a thrill," Dan Baker said. "He could have been second or third and we would have been so proud of him. He dug in to get past. He was trying. He gave us everything he had."

Teamwork

Before the race, Beecher nodded to Road to Oz's silken tail and spotless legs and gave credit to one person.

"Rebecca, she looks after this fellow like a pet dog," Beecher said of his wife. "She washes his legs every day with soap. Every day. I'm not saying all these horses today don't get great care, but I know the work she puts into it. It's so much. She's a big part of it, massively part of it. She looks after the horses and really looks after this guy. He gets that funk on his legs and if she's not there on top of it they'll blow up. I like to say that I'm in charge of everything on the horses, she's in charge of everything off them."

As the daughter of trainer Henry Walters, she grew up around flat horses and not so much steeplechase racing, but Rebecca skipped her senior prom at John Carroll High to attend the 2010 Maryland Hunt Cup.

Fifteen years later, she led up a winner.

Mark Beecher came to the United States to ride for owner George Mahoney in 2010 and won with his first mount – Services Rendered in a three-runner foxhunters' timber at Virginia's Loudoun Point-to-Point. His rivals refused the first fence and Beecher rode "longer than John Wayne," but the win led to other opportunities, including the mount on Private Attack for trainer Alicia Murphy.

"I was an Irish jockey who won his first timber race, but if you'd have watched it you wouldn't have given me much of a chance," he said. "I finished second in the Grand National and Hunt Cup on Private Attack and I told myself, 'I've got to come back and try to win this race.' "

He came back in 2011, but Private Attack won the Hunt Cup with Blythe Miller Davies. Beecher came off Haddix at the sixth fence. More Fascination fell at the same fence in 2012 and Beecher questioned his decision making.

"It was the Hunt Cup that brought me back, I probably wouldn't have come back without it," he said. "But for the next two years if somebody mentioned the Hunt Cup to me, I might have taken their head off."

A year later, everything was different as Beecher won with Professor Maxwell despite all but falling off at the ninth fence and losing his stirrups for a few fences. Two years after that, the jockey hoisted another Hunt Cup when Raven's Choice was elevated to the win after Bethany Baumgardner's weight pad came loose on Imperial Way. Beecher stopped riding races in 2019, after 52 wins (at least one in pretty much every timber race of note) and partnerships with standouts Grinding Speed, Cornhusker (GB) and Mystic Strike in addition to his Hunt Cup winners.

Training came naturally. Training to win a Hunt Cup, maybe not so much.

"People asked me, 'Will you have Hunt Cup horses?' and I said no, not unless they come. That wasn't the vision when I

"He's a complete pet. He'd probably live in my house if he could. He's the sweetest horse in the barn. He eats anything. He likes donuts. It took him a bit to come out of his shell when we first got him, but I wouldn't say too long. And he loves to be dirty. Luckily, he's not white."

– Rebecca Beecher, trainer Mark Beecher's wife and assistant, on Road to Oz's personality

went into training. I said I'd like to train winners, but not seek out Hunt Cup horses. If they're there, they'll come upon you. You just don't know. You can't run out and find them as such."

Road to Oz's owners, the Bakers, were an early client in 2015 with Sky Count. Beecher rode the timber horse to a win three years earlier, but took over his training and got two seasons out of him.

"He was injured, and we didn't think he'd ever come back to the races," Dan Baker said. "Mark wasn't really training at that point, but he said he'd take him on, and he did. Then he had an injury that ended his career."

Sky Count found another career as a foxhunting staff horse, and the Bakers have been part of the barn ever since with Road to Oz and veteran hurdler Decisive Triumph the main players now.

"They're great owners, they're fun people to train for and they understand that not everything's going to work out," said Beecher. "Sky Count taught me more than I ever wanted to know and Decisive Triumph is 12 years old and is harder than a coffin nail."

Road to Oz makes it easy, as easy as training a 10-year-old to pursue one goal can be.

"There's very little he doesn't do well," Beecher said. "He's an exceptional hunter, all the kids have been on him. He's really part of the barn. Some people's horses are a bit crazy or nuts, this fella is the opposite. To get him to do more is the challenge or the thing you have to work on."

The Beechers met at Ann Merryman's farm when he gave her a riding lesson. "I guess it went fine," Rebecca said. "He was a little direct, very direct."

Something stuck as they were married in 2018, have three children (Áine, 5; Owen, almost 3; and Lucy, 6 months), bought a farm in White Hall two-plus years ago and work at a growing racing/training business. The stable won a career-best 13 races in 2024 and was up to seven (from 25 starts through May 9) this year. Like Road to Oz, some horses come from claims or purchases off the flat, but a Beecher horse might just as likely be an Irish-bred or a Timonium sale purchase.

Winning a Hunt Cup with one packs a punch.

"It's something you dream about, winning one of the big races like that," Rebecca said. "It was pretty exciting. It means more almost with him because he was a cheap claimer and we started him. We've had him six years. You put so much time and effort into them. They end up being part of your family." ■

The Steeplechase Times

GRAND NATIONAL RACES

Weekend Warrior

SECOND AT THE MANOR, WRESTLINGWITHRAE SHINES AT BUTLER

By Joe Clancy ■ *Photographs by Douglas Lees*

A week after getting run down in the stretch by Bogey's Image at My Lady's Manor, Wrestlingwithrae (Ire) turned in another solid effort to win the $35,000 Grand National timber stakes at Butler, Md., April 19.

This time, jockey Jordan Canavan convinced his horse to rate – reluctantly at first – behind Wagner (Ire), Queens Empire (Ire) and Great Road early. Canavan made it work for 2 miles and saved ground while waiting. Wagner led into the 15th of 18 fences, where Wrestlingwithrae took advantage of a mistake by Great Road to reach second. Wrestlingwithrae landed over the 16th with a slight lead, but Wagner handled a tight final turn and they jumped the 17th together. Wrestlingwithrae pulled ahead coming to the last, wandered off line just a little and landed running to hold off a fast-closing Goodoldtimes (Ire) by a length at the finish. Queens Empire was another length back in third with Wagner fourth after 3¼ miles in 6:35.20.

Canavan was impressed with his horse's step forward in seven days.

"I was second on him last week, but the race just fell apart," said the jockey. "He ran well, he ran an absolute blinder. It was just a race that fell apart for him. Here I just rode him a bit further back and I had something to aim at. I had a target in front of me and that helped. He was excellent the whole way around, jumped perfect, traveled great."

Trained by Leslie Young for Michael Smith, the 7-year-old won for the third time in five timber starts. He stayed busy and finished fourth in the Virginia Gold Cup two weeks after the Grand National while getting to $61,800 earned since being imported to the United States. Thanks to an Irish point-to-point win, Smith and Young had to go to $237,764 to land the son of English-bred Snow Sky at the Tattersalls national hunt sale in May 2022.

Wrestlingwithrae made one hurdle start that summer, but didn't run again until October 2024. Over timber, he finished fifth at Virginia Fall Oct. 12 and won at Callaway Gardens Nov. 2. He opened 2025 with an allowance win at Cheshire before three consecutive stakes starts.

"He was brought over to be something else," said Chris Read, a former steeplechase jockey and assistant trainer who manages Smith's farm in Middleburg, Va. "He got an injury, so we gave him more than enough time, and Leslie decided he was going to make a good timber horse. He was second to a really nice horse [at the Manor]. Coming back here in a week was a little close, but why not? He showed us that was the right decision."

Canavan said Wrestlingwithrae appreciates the pace and distance of timber racing.

"He'd have been fine over hurdles, too, but I think the timber and the extended trip just brings out the best of him," said the jockey. "He wouldn't be out of place back home in Ireland."

In his first U.S. season, Canavan was busy. He finished second in the Manor, won the Grand National and had Monbeg

Wrestlingwithrae lands over a fence early in the Grand National timber stakes, a week after finishing second in the My Lady's Manor.

Wrestlingwithrae (left) powers over a fence ahead of Wagner and Goodoldtimes in the Grand National.

Stream (Ire) going well until the final stages of the Maryland Hunt Cup. The jockey won with his first two point-to-point mounts, on the flat at Warrenton, March 15.

The native of Northern Ireland rode as a professional in England and Ireland – winning for trainer Jonjo O'Neill in England in 2017 and for Robert Tyner in Ireland the following year – before taking out an amateur license.

"I'm enjoying myself so far and things couldn't be going any better," said Canavan, who credited Young and assistant Brianne Slater with helping make the introduction smooth. "It's just a different style of riding and racing. At home, you go down to a hurdle or a fence and you're going forward. The horses can brush away through them, but here with timber you have to respect them. Timber fences take a lot of jumping and they take a lot of respect. If you don't respect them, you'll learn to."

Canavan knew several Irish riders now based in the U.S. including Dan Nevin, Barry John Foley and Sean McDermott and got advice from roommate (and former champion) Darren Nagle this spring.

"He sits me down at the kitchen table and we watch replays on the laptop," Canavan said. "That's helping me."

In Ireland, Canavan worked for Eugene O'Sullivan and was close with the trainer's nephew Michael, Ireland's champion conditional (apprentice) jockey of 2023. Michael died Feb. 16, 10 days after being injured in a fall at Thurles Race Course. A winner of 95 races under rules, he was just 24 years old.

"What I'm doing over here I'd like to dedicate to Michael," Canavan said. "When I rode my first winner here, it wasn't long after Michael's passing. I looked up and I knew he was looking down on me. Oh man, that was a feeling."

Being a steeplechase jockey is never easy. Carrying on after a friend's passing in the sport only adds to the task.

"It's been torturous," said Canavan. "You just put it to the back of your mind and you know you just have to keep kicking. He wouldn't want you to stop. He was a very dedicated

chap and he loved the game. He definitely would have enjoyed Maryland timber racing."

Nevin, Beecher win another maiden timber; Neilson doubles

After hopping off maiden timber winner Eternal Story (Fr) at My Lady's Manor, Dan Nevin said there were a few other promising maiden timber horses in trainer Mark Beecher's barn.

Hello Track And Trace (Ire), a 2024 import for Bruton Street-US who romped in the $15,000 maiden timber. The 8-year-old son of Mahler stayed out of trouble in a crowded field of 10, took over in the final mile and drew off to score by 10¾ lengths. Hey Teacher (GB) settled for second with Blackstair Rocco (Ire) third. The winner raced for Bruton Street in England, winning once each over hurdles and chase fences. Converted to timber in the U.S., he tuned up for the Grand National with a second at Green Spring Point-to-Point March 30.

Nevin gave his horse credit for sticking with the plan.

"There wasn't a whole lot of room around there with 10 horses in the race, but I jumped off to make it with Brett [Owings, on Sorolla]. There was so much going on down inside that I pulled wide and got clear of them. You could just hear all the commotion on my inside, but I even got there too early."

In front with five fences to go, Track And Trace fought off Hey Teacher over the second-last, led by 4 lengths at the last and saw it out.

"My jumping took me there, he was traveling so well," said Nevin. "It's a lot to take in for a maiden here. It's different from a school at home to going out here at a speed, especially when there's a full field. You're going to have to pop some fences and get it right all the way around."

Two weeks after the Grand National, he won at Winterthur to flash even more potential.

Trainer Kathy Neilson doubled to close the day, part of an eight-win start to the spring season for the Pennsylvania trainer. Hard Game won the $15,000 Benjamin Murray Memorial allowance timber for jockey Freddie Procter and an ownership group carrying the same name as the horse.

Hard Game LLC consists of Virginians Justin Wiley, brother-in-law Mike Massie and friends Rob Farmer and David Perdue. Managing partner Wiley was on hand at the Grand National, his first trip to the meet in decades.

"I was here a long time ago, as a little kid," he said moments after accepting the trophy. "I've grown up around steeplechase my whole life, and I love tradition, and I want to see the tradition of steeplechase continue. It's really fun to have a horse, and it's hard to go to the races if you don't have a horse. It makes it a whole lot more fun."

Wiley's father Hugh rode for the U.S. Equestrian Team at the 1956 and 1960 Olympics, and mother Serena was a regular foxhunter and rider. Justin grew up riding, foxhunted and has long been involved with carriage-driving horses. He has worked with the Montpelier and Foxfield steeplechase meets and owned steeplechasers with Neilson and Ricky Hendriks in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Wiley and company decided to get back into racing and Neilson found Hard Game in a $12,500 claimer at Parx Racing in 2021. The trainer credited her daughter Skylar McKenna with the homework, picking out the son of Hard Spun (sire of champion steeplechaser Snap Decision) on paper.

A chase and hurdle winner in England, Track And Trace propels to victory in the maiden timber.

"We tried to claim a couple of horses before then, but we got him because he went over to the paddock with no bandages on and the guy leading him up didn't have a lip chain on him or anything – and he was talking on the phone," Neilson said. "I'm like, 'We want him.' "

As expected with that audition, Hard Game took to farm life and jump racing. He won over hurdles (at Foxfield) in October 2022 and made his timber debut last spring. Six starts in 2024 produced two seconds and a third. The 7-year-old finished second (by a nose) at Cheshire March 30 and placed fourth at the Manor before breaking through at the Grand National. One of two maidens in the field of six that included 2024 Maryland Hunt Cup winner Blackhall (Ire), Hard Game rated in fourth early. Procter advanced Hard Game along the inside with a lap to go, jumped to second over the 11th fence and took command between the final two. He drew off to score by 8½ lengths over The Butler Yates (Ire) with Rocket Star Red third after 3¼ miles in 6:32.80.

Neilson was back in the winner's circle with Imperial Assassin (Ire) one race later as the 7-year-old captured the $15,000 Western Run Plate for apprentice jockeys. Owned by Armata Stables and ridden by Nevin, the winner took over from Storm Team and Fast Vision (Fr) around the final turn and outran Fast Vision over the final two fences to win by 9 lengths after 3 miles in 6:17.80. Fast Vision finished second with Storm Team third.

Purchased for $52,836 at the same sale as Wrestlingwithrae, Imperial Assassin ran six times over hurdles including a maid-

en win in October 2023, but missed a year and emerged this spring as a timber horse. He won at Cheshire March 30 and backed it up at the Grand National.

A partnership created by longtime friends Ben Griswold IV and Perry Bolton, Armata carries on after Bolton's death at age 94 in January. The day's program included a dedication to Bolton from the Grand National committee and the win carried a little extra meaning.

"It's just good to see him doing well," Neilson said of her horse. "He was meant to be a fancy hurdle horse from Ireland, but that didn't turn out. It's a gift to win here for Mr. Griswold [over whose Meadow Run Farm much of the course runs]. He's a great owner to work for and I feel grateful to work for him." ■

Claimed at Parx Racing in 2021, Hard Game elevates on the way to victory in the Benjamin Murray Memorial.

A Kathy Neilson trainee like Hard Game, Imperial Assassin (left) and Paddy's Crown jump as a team in the Western Run Plate.

The Steeplechase Times

MY LADY'S MANOR RACES

Patience is a Virtue

MARYLAND-BRED BOGEY'S IMAGE REWARDS APPROACH WITH STAKES TRIUMPH

By Joe Clancy ■ *Photographs by Douglas Lees*

Trainer Sean McDermott called trainer Joe Davies about a timber prospect. The 4-year-old had run twice over hurdles, but looked and acted like longer distances and stiffer fences might be his true calling.

"If you can put together a buyer," McDermott said, "this horse will be a nice timber horse someday."

Mission accomplished.

Almost four years after that conversation in spring 2021, Bogey's Image is indeed a nice timber horse. Bred in Maryland by Bob and Anne Kinsley's South Branch Equine, the son of Imagining became a stakes winner in the $50,000 My Lady's Manor in Monkton, Md., April 12. Ridden by the trainer's son Teddy Davies, Bogey's Image ran past Wrestlingwithrae (Ire) in the stretch to score by 7½ lengths with Theda's Boy third after 3 miles in 6:20.

Now 8, the chestnut gelding was raw but improving when McDermott and Davies had that conversation.

Davies and owners Dan Colhoun, Achsah O'Donovan and Harvey Goolsby stuck to long-range goals from the outset. They left the horse with McDermott for the rest of 2021, and Bogey's Image won a maiden hurdle at Shawan Downs in September and finished second in a stakes for 4-year-old hurdlers in October at Far Hills.

Then came timber lessons and incremental exposure to the new career, even if it was tempting to stay hurdling.

"I'm in the timber business, hurdles are not my specialty," said Joe Davies, a seven-time winner of the Maryland Hunt Cup as a trainer. "I don't aspire to win hurdle races. I remember saying to the partners, 'We're going to cultivate this horse as a timber horse.' "

So they did.

As a 5-year-old in 2022, he won a point-to-point and finished third in a maiden at the Grand National. In 2023, he won two point-to-points and scored in that Grand National maiden. In 2024, he won a point-to-point, landed the allowance timber at the Grand National and placed in two stakes.

Like the other years, 2025 started with foxhunting, then the Foxhall team chase. Davies entered at Green Spring Valley Point-to-Point March 30, but scratched when the ground came up firm. On better ground at Elkridge-Harford Point-to-Point a week later, Bogey's Image won and headed to the Manor. There, he rated behind leader Storm Team early, and found a rhythm. Bogey's Image let Wrestlingwithrae and Theda's Boy make plays for the lead after the 12th fence as the field bunched for the final three-quarters of a mile. Bogey's

Eventual winner Bogey's Image (second from left) stalks Storm Team midway through the My Lady's Manor timber stakes and brought a crowd to the winner's platform.

Marcel Magic (left) flies a fence in front of Lightning Ridge in the John Rush Streett maiden timber.

Image flew the 14th to touch down in third and took aim on the leaders at the top of the stretch. He moved to second over the 15th, challenged Wrestlingwithrae at the last and drew off late.

The polished effort felt like a payoff to his trainer, as impressed by an anxious moment as he was the victory. Bogey's Image got in a little tight to the 13th fence, a 3-foot-8 post-and rail, while between horses. He jumped fine, but landed to his left and lost a little momentum. Briefly fifth running downhill afterward, he came up with the jump he needed to at the 14th – filling the bridle and taking off from well back to land with power.

"He just shuffled the ground a little bit when Teddy asked him and he didn't quite leave," Davies said of the 13th. "I was happy that he left it out when he needed to. I just loved seeing that. As a spectator, you just don't know. Was the horse running out of gas as he came to the third-last? Everybody was kind of excited, making their moves and he jumped that really well."

Unraced on the flat, Bogey's Image won his third National Steeplechase Association timber race (to go with that hurdle win). Third in the Virginia Gold Cup May 3, he has earned $95,500 in a dozen sanctioned starts – all over jumps.

"We have really taken our time with this horse and it's a rare sort of case where you get to take a horse that probably had real potential over hurdles and we get to nurture him and go slowly with him to really develop him into a nice timber horse and not overface him," Davies said. "He's quite a good jumper, but we've still stayed conservative and tried to do right by him. I'm thrilled with that."

On the winner's stand afterward, the result produced even more thrills and a few tears from the likes of Julie Colhoun

Eternal Story (center) touches down over the 13th fence in the Thomas H. Voss Memorial maiden timber.

(co-owner Dan's mother and the daughter of Maryland timber legend Janon Fisher Jr.) as the owners received the Janon Fisher Bowl perpetual trophy.

"The trophy is named after my grandfather so that's pretty cool," said Dan Colhoun afterward. "All the grandchildren are up there so it means something to still be part of it. I don't really think too much about it during the race, I was just taking it one fence at a time."

Just like the horse.

Newcomers shine on undercard

The $20,000 John Rush Streett Memorial (named for one of the meet's founders) maiden timber showcased another hurdle convert as Marcel Magic (Ire) ran away to a 4-length win for Motley Crew Racing, trainer Kathy Neilson and jockey Freddie Procter. After winning an Irish point-to-point in April last year, the winner cost $94,279 as a hurdle prospect at the Goffs Punchestown Sale in May but lost all three American starts last fall.

Fifth at Foxfield, pulled up at Far Hills and fourth at Callaway Gardens, the now 5-year-old switched disciplines for 2025 and showed immediate promise with a second at Cheshire Point-to-Point in March. He took another step forward at the Manor, rating in mid-pack early, moving to third while on hold at the ninth fence and taking control after the 12th. He served notice with a huge leap at the 13th and withstood a challenge from Neilson-trained stablemate Hey Teacher (GB) late with Project Two (Ire) well back in third after 3 miles in 6:23.40.

"They had very high hopes from over hurdles, and he just never quite showed what he was promising at home," said Procter. "I liked him a lot from the first day I sat on him back

Jockey Sophie O'Brien's parents, Tracy and Darren, flank trainer Joe Davies in the winner's circle, with groom Lauren Mentzel after Mr. Fine Threads won the John D. Schapiro for apprentice jockeys.

at Kathy's. I think every jockey that sat on him has thought the same thing."

Procter, a winner of five races in three years at the Manor, said the extended timber trip made a big difference.

"I think it's the change to 3 miles," he said. "This is what really suits him. He obviously handled the soft ground well today, but I don't think that's necessarily what he needs. I think he'd be just as good on good ground."

The $20,000 Tom Voss Memorial, a second maiden timber on the card, looked like a showdown between Potus and Eternal Story (Fr) beforehand and lived up to it as they occupied the top two positions much of the way.

Strong early, Eternal Story settled for Dan Nevin after three fences as Potus and Virginia Korrell set the pace. About halfway through, Potus led a couple of lengths over Take Profit. Eternal Story jumped the ninth and 10th well to threaten and took over for good running downhill to the 14th. Inside around the final turn, Eternal Story carried a 3-length lead into the second-last and built on it from there to win by 7½ for Runnymoore Racing and trainer Mark Beecher in 6:22.60. Potus stayed for second with Take Profit third.

"He's a horse to kind of sit quiet on early to let him warm up into it, but when he was warming up, he kind of decided to lock on a bit and pull," said Nevin. "I was happy enough to follow Virginia the whole way. She gave a nice toe into the race. I winged the third-last, landed in front and I had loads of horse underneath me. I just let him extend his stride a bit and he put the race to bed very quick."

Imported after five losses in Irish races, the winner made two starts for trainer Leslie Young in 2022 and won a maiden hurdle in 2023. Converted to timber, he finished fourth twice last fall. The 8-year-old moved to Beecher's barn for 2025 and tuned up for the Manor with a win at Piedmont Point-to-Point March 22.

"You can tell at home he's improved a ton after that run, and we worked him the other day and he was good and fresh," said Nevin. "We quietly fancied him here today. Just with the ground, you never know. It was soft ground, but he's a French-bred horse. We didn't think he'd have any issue with the ground and he proved it there."

A winning jockey named Sophie O'Brien might make you assume another Irish visitor has jumped into the ranks with

Sophie O'Brien, riding her first race, pushes Mr. Fine Threads to victory.

Conor Tierney, Dan Nevin, Jordan Canavan and the others on the amateur timber circuit. But this one was all Maryland.

Nineteen-year-old Marylander O'Brien, a Hereford High School graduate, booted home Armata Stables' Mr. Fine Threads in the $15,000 John D. Schapiro allowance timber for apprentice jockeys on her first try under NSA rules. O'Brien produced her horse in the stretch and the 12-year-old swept past Monbeg Stream (Ire) and Road to Oz to win by 1½ lengths.

Twice a stakes winner, Monbeg Stream set the pace as Mr. Fine Threads rated last of four. Road to Oz rated in second with Crealion (Fre) third. They were still that way three fences from the finish. Monbeg Stream stumbled over that one, but jumped the last two in front as Road to Oz cut into the margin. Behind them, Mr. Fine Threads took out rails but found his best stride and stayed straight, while his foes drifted, to take the lead in the final nine strides. In tighteners for the Maryland Hunt Cup two weeks later, Monbeg Stream held second by a length over Road to Oz after 3 miles in 6:25.80.

O'Brien foxhunted, rode pony races and has spent about three years in the Davies barn. Her racing career started early with a leadline trot race in 2010. In 2019, she won three junior field master's races for small ponies and won a junior flat race in 2022 before getting some more standard point-to-point activity this year. She rode two races each at Piedmont and Elkridge-Harford, and showed good timing at the Manor.

"I had a late start, so I had no clue how he was going early and I just didn't want to make a move too fast," O'Brien said. "I was just staying in and seeing what would happen, but toward the end, I was like, 'OK, he has something. He's got more energy.' He's so nice to ride. He jumps really well. He helps you ride him well."

Owned by Armata Stables, Mr. Fine Threads raced over hurdles in 2019 before switching to timber. He won at Genesee Valley in 2023 and at the Grand National last year. The Sightseeing gelding was bred in Maryland by William Harris.

■

French Twist

MARYLAND-BRED MAXFIELD COLT TOPS $1 MILLION AT ARQANA

The 25-year reach of excellence spurred by New Jersey-bred mare Who Did It and Run opened another chapter at the Arqana Breeze-Up Sale at Deauville, France May 10.

A 2-year-old Maxfield colt bred in Maryland by Sycamore Hall Farm out of Who Did It and Run's daughter American Victory sold for $1.12 million on a bid from international racing powerhouse Godolphin by agent Anthony Stroud. One of four seven-figure horses at the sale, the colt may not have touted himself to that level, but he made an impression from the start at Sycamore Hall.

"As a yearling, he was on the smaller side, but he had a fantastic walk on him," said Emma Trenary, who manages the Chesapeake City farm for the Golden family. "For his size, he had a great big walk on him, was well-balanced and real athletic. The mare really stamps them with that big, athletic walk."

Foaled in April 2023, the colt went to Keeneland September last year and brought $70,000 from Irish pinhooker Norman Williamson's Oak Tree Farm. Based in County Meath northwest of Dublin, Williamson was a leading jump jockey from 1988-2003 with wins in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, Champion Hurdle and King George on his resume. Since retiring, he turned his attention to sales horses and has produced the likes of Preakness Stakes-G1 winner War of Will, Australian champion Contributer (Ire) and European champions Native Trail (GB) and Eldar Eldarov (GB).

Godolphin purchased this year's English Two Thousand Guineas winner Ruling Court, a Kentucky-bred also pinhooked via Keeneland September, from Williamson at the same sale last year.

The Maxfield colt fit the prospect model at Keeneland and got a boost at Arqana as Godolphin supported the first crop of its Kentucky-based stallion. The colt also stood up for himself.

"He's a very good species, has very good conformation, and is a good walker; he's very athletic," said Stroud. "He moved very well and Maxfield stands at Jonabell so we liked him a lot."

The colt's roots go through the Mid-Atlantic, and even Stroud took note of that.

"They breed a lot of good horses, so that's a good sign," he said of Sycamore Hall. "That horse will go to Dubai so he'll run on dirt and if he's good enough he'll end up racing in America as well. That's racing nowadays, isn't it?"

Sycamore Hall founder Richard Golden bought into Who Did It and Run with owner/trainer Debra Sones because of sire Polish Numbers, who stood at Golden's Northview Stallion Station then. The chestnut filly won her debut by 6½ lengths against New Jersey-breds at Monmouth Park in 1997 and went on to defeat males in the 1998 Jersey Derby-G2 at Garden State and win the Reeve Schley Jr.-G3 at Monmouth. She retired in 1999 with nine wins, $325,756 earned and a future as a broodmare.

Three foals into the plan, Sones sold her half to Golden, who got a bargain. Who Did It and Run's 12 foals include nine winners topped by stakes winner Giant Run, who earned $456,540 after selling for $200,000 as a yearling. Others included $360,000 yearling Apple Cider, $160,000 yearling Wally Did It, $110,000 yearling Stuttgart, and stakes winner American Victory. Several daughters became stakes producers, American Victory and Who's Cozy among them.

American Victory won Laurel Park's Shine Again Stakes for Golden and Rodney Jenkins and produced six winners including stakes-placed Charmed Victory and stakes winner

A Maryland-bred 2-year-old colt by Maxfield, bred by Sycamore Hall Farm, steps around the Arqana auction ring.

Victory Rally. American Victory died this year, but her reach extends through daughter Victory Rally (dam of two winners) and half-sister Stickingtogether (whose Engage filly sold for $115,000 at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic as a yearling last year).

American Victory's last foal joins one of the world's most powerful racing strings with trainer Charlie Appleby. The colt will have plenty of fans in Maryland.

"We knew he was in the sale, but didn't know anything about him really," said Trenary. "There were some photos of him and I thought, 'Wow, he's really grown up.' He definitely grew up. I don't think we had any idea he'd sell that well."

Williamson's big score would make any breeder question prior decisions, but the colt's $70,000 value fit in September.

"Always, you second guess those, but it makes you think you're breeding or buying the right types of horses and that's important," said David Wade, who oversees Sycamore Hall and Northview. "We developed that horse's family and we're proud of him and the work we did."

– Joe Clancy

Best A Luck blends states to sales success

A Pennsylvania-bred filly by first-crop sire Yaupon was among the regional highlights at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Company's spring sale of 2-year-olds in April, selling for $325,000. Consigned by Best A Luck Farm, who bred her in partnership with Best Foot Forward Holdings, the filly is a

JUDIT SEIPERT

Hip 822, a Pennsylvania-bred filly by Yaupon bred in partnership by Best A Luck, sold for $325,000 at OBS in April.

product of a long-running strategic breeding program that has quietly thrived out of Florida with deep roots in Pennsylvania.

Owned and operated by Tommy and Lori Fackler, Best A Luck Farm in Reddick, Fla., has maintained a presence in Pennsylvania for years. The dual-state approach helped produce standouts such as 2018 Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint-G1 winner and champion female sprinter Shamrock Rose.

The Yaupon filly, out of the Broken Vow mare Broken Blues, made her presence felt from the beginning.

"She's always been a really pretty filly and was one of our favorites," said Lori Fackler. "We're really hopeful for her to go on and do something."

She was purchased by Three Amigos, a West Coast-based group, after breezing a furlong in :10.20 during the under-tack preview. The April foal is a half-sister to multiple stakes winner Dicey and 2025 winner Ringer Card.

While based in Florida, the Facklers have committed a substantial portion of their operation to Pennsylvania.

"The Pennsylvania program is actually a big part of our greater operation," Fackler said. "We usually breed the bulk of our mares in Pennsylvania. We'll do a few in New York, also in Maryland, and maybe an older mare or two in Kentucky. But the Pennsylvania breeders program is so strong, that's a big reason why we're up there."

The incentives offered in Pennsylvania have consistently allowed Best A Luck to remain competitive while managing a small broodmare band. From breeders' awards to enhanced purse structures, the economics tip north.

"There's a very significant difference between the Florida breeding program and the Pennsylvania breeding program," Fackler said. "Yes, you have to ship a horse up to foal and then ship back down, but it's still much more lucrative than it is in Florida, so it helps balance everything out so we can do what we need to do."

Best A Luck's approach is rooted in flexibility – foal in one state, prep in another, and evaluate each horse's path as an individual.

"We try to do a little bit of everything," she said. "That includes the breeding portion so that when we go to sales looking for the type of individual we want, we don't have to pay as much for a really nice stud fee. Another part that helps with residuals is the breeders' awards."

And while the operation is largely geared toward the commercial market, the Facklers occasionally keep a horse to race, especially when regional incentives align.

"It's breeding to sell," she said. "Once in a while we'll have something to race, which makes it a little more interesting, too. We actually have a horse right now with Mike Trombetta that's a Maryland-bred in line to develop in the program, and that's a lot more lucrative as well. We're just trying to play all the little angles to help balance everything out."

– Ali Çetinok

Other OBS Highlights

• A Virginia-bred colt by Maxfield out of the Smart Strike mare Bilboquet sold for $490,000 to West Coast Racing. Bred by Audley Farm Equine, the colt was a $135,000 yearling at Keeneland September last year. Consigned by Navas Equine, he is a half-brother to the stakes-placed Kendama . . . A Maryland-bred filly by freshman sire Independence Hall sold late in the sale for $285,000 to Scott and Evan Dilworth from the consignment of Eddie Woods. She breezed a furlong in :09.80, equaling the fastest time of more than 615 recorded at the distance. Bred by Country Life Farm and Huron Racing Ventures from the Posse mare Hiding, she was a $30,000 weanling at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic December sale and $100,000 yearling at Keeneland September. . . A Pennsylvania-bred Vekoma filly out of the Forestry mare Eskimo Princess, who breezed a furlong in :10, sold for $275,000 to agent Ben Gowans. Consigned by De Meric Sales, the chestnut was bred by Ted Hoover and previously sold for $60,000 at Fasig-Tipton Kentucky's October yearling sale. ■

The Steeplechase Times

Ups and Downs

THREE-TIME JOCKEY CHAMP WATTERS RIDES WAVE OF WINS, FALLS

By Sean Clancy ■ *Photographs by Douglas Lees*

One thought.

Battered and bloodied and being strapped to a backboard, Graham Watters hadn't begun his checklist of pain, hadn't considered how lucky or unlucky he was, hadn't begun to think about what had happened earlier that day.

His wife, Rosie, seven months pregnant and many years versed in these moments, looked down at her husband as EMTs went to work at the far end of Glenwood Park in Middleburg, Va., April 19.

One thought.

Snap Decision. Iroquois. Three weeks.

"It's two years ago all over again," Watters said to his wife, while spitting blood from a broken nose and a broken cheekbone.

She nodded. She knew.

Two years ago, Watters suffered a compression fracture in his back from a fall at the Virginia Gold Cup, a week before Snap Decision was due to run in the spring's biggest stakes, the Grade 1 Iroquois. Same thing, Watters thought about Snap Decision before the medics arrived. The Irish-born jockey missed the ride and the Kentucky-bred missed winning the Iroquois for the third time, finishing second to Irish raider Scaramanga (Ire). The what ifs still hurt, still hover. Snap Decision and Watters came back and won their third Iroquois the following season. This year, the Jack Fisher-trained 11-year-old was aiming at becoming the first horse to win four editions of the Iroquois. Ever. And become the sport's leading earner. Ever.

And there was Watters lying in a heap, crumpled and concussed after a second-hurdle fall from Dream North in a filly and mare maiden, 32 minutes after guiding Snap Decision to win a fourth Temple Gwathmey Handicap-G2, in what seemed like the perfect table setting for their Iroquois defense. Now, Dream North had pulled the tablecloth.

"Straight away," said Watters after being asked when he thought about Snap Decision. "Straight away."

Jump jockeys don't look back. Well, active jump jockeys don't look back.

"I was lying there, getting strapped to a board and getting medevacked out of there," Watters said. "All I could think about was two years ago."

And he was doing the math. Two years ago, the Iroquois loomed in a week. This time, it was three weeks.

"I don't know if being a jockey is being smart or brave or just stupid, maybe a combination of all the things," Watters said. "I don't even know what's wrong with me, but it's 'How long is it going to take to get back?' "

What was wrong with him pinballed. On course, it was possibly his back, his face for sure, definitely his head. Movement in his arms was a beacon of optimism until it was noted that no one said anything about his legs. In the emergency room at Inova Fairfax, X-rays flashed on the screen like fruit on a slot machine. First it was his pelvis, his wrist, and of course, his nose, it was smashed across his face, a slice of apple pie thrown at a wall. The emergency room doctors, with worn-out eyes and blood-splattered Crocs, came and went, each with a new diagnosis. Pelvis is fine. Old compression fracture at C1, maybe C5. Not a compound fracture of his left wrist, just a cut near the bone. A fractured arm for sure. Not displaced. It'll heal in time. A fractured cheekbone, that'll heal. A busted finger, not discussed or considered, an afterthought in a bloodbath. Bandages began to get unwound. Blood began to get cleaned up. Ice chips were approved, a cup

of water came next, a room for the night was ordered. Surgery scheduled in the morning. Nah, no surgery. Years of medical school crammed into a Saturday night.

The final diagnosis; a broken cheekbone, a concussion, a broken right finger, a broken left arm, a broken nose. No surgery needed. By the time Rosie walked out of the hospital Saturday night, her husband was in good spirits, considering, and remembering everything that had happened that day.

"Same old Snap," Watters said. "Same horse as when I sat on him as a 6-year-old. Just feels the same horse. No change."

Owned by Bruton Street-US, Snap Decision earned his 17th hurdle win in his 29th start, staving off Abaan by a neck in the $100,000 stakes. Carrying 164 pounds in the handicap, Snap Decision gave 18 pounds to the runner-up, 20 pounds to third-placed Who's Counting and 24 pounds to fourth-placed Howyabud (Ire).

"That was a big one. Even though he's a bit older, we seem to have him a bit fitter than normal for some reason," Watters said. "The pace was much stronger than previous years. I jumped out sharp, before I knew it down to the first, I was sitting fifth or sixth, which I was fine with, it was a good gallop all the way. The running of the race was old-school Snap, running, jumping, traveling."

Snap Decision pulled his pilot wide and early, rolling around the Middleburg hills like he was on rails as Jimmy P set the pace, Who's Counting took it up and Abaan tried to attack late. A neck margin but never in doubt as Snap Decision idled into and around the elbow.

"Back of three out, the two boys are going at it in front of me, they're taking each other on going down to two out," Watters said. "I'm just saying to myself, 'Easy, easy, just pop this, we'll get a lead down to the last.' I'm three strides off them and I wing it, I land a half-length in front of them. I was like, 'Oh, well, I've gotten there too soon again.' He's such a horse for a routine, he's so consistent, it was a nearly a photocopy of the three previous times I won on him. He just takes you."

Snap Decision took the sport that day; obliterating opinions, uniting impressions, transcending camps. He won the Gwathmey, an important race since its creation in 1924, for a history-making fourth time. The previous winners list goes deep to Hall of Famers Flatterer, Lonesome Glory, Zaccio, Bon Nouvel, Neji, Fairmount and other legends such as Soothsayer, Top Bid, Benguala and Amber Diver. Snap Decision made them move over – a little anyway – at Middleburg.

A race later, Watters was in a helicopter on his way to the emergency room and wondering about his future. The next morning, the three-time champion was in his hospital room looking for an accomplice. A big, burly, sportsman surgeon in a New York Jets hat came to read Watters' X-rays, check on his pain. Watters had his man.

"Six to eight weeks and your arm will heal," the surgeon said while checking on a previously inserted three-inch plate in the wrist joint, which had done its job.

"How about three?" Watters asked and told him a story about a horse named Snap Decision and his bid for history.

"Sure, we'll get you there, but only if I put a plate in it. You seem like a tough guy, as soon as you get out of surgery, as soon as you can bear with the pain, you can get back on a horse," the surgeon said. "If you get a fall again, you're not going to break it where you broke it yesterday, you're going to break it further up where there's no plate."

Surgery was scheduled for Wednesday. A 10-inch incision, a five-inch plate, four screws. Watters was in and out in a day.

"Being an arm, I wasn't really too concerned, I knew if I got it strapped up or bolted up or something it would be good. I had three weeks to worry about it," Watters said. "These are just the risks we're taking every day. For me, it's not an option, going into Nashville."

Five days after surgery, Watters galloped five horses at Fisher's farm in Butler, Md., felt as good as ever and told Fisher he was ready to go a week earlier than expected. Fisher called his owners and named Watters on five horses at the Virginia Gold Cup May 3.

"There were some big purses and some nice horses to ride. I was riding out all week and schooling everything," said the 33-year-old. "The 'what if, what if,' it's just something you have to get over and get on with it."

Watters got on Derby Street to finish second in a maiden hurdle in the opener, finished fourth on Minella Juke (Ire) in his second ride and sat out the Commonwealth Cup when Fisher scratched Awakened because of ground concerns.

Watters' next two rides? Like he had never left.

He put Keys Discount on the pace in the Virginia Gold Cup, allowed the 6-year-old to settle in the mid stages before inheriting the lead when a loose horse carried out Uco Valley (Ire) heading to the water jump on the final circuit. From there, the Maryland-bred son of Medal Count poured on the pressure to turn back Family Tree (GB) by 1¾ lengths.

"He impressed me. Four miles, 23 fences is a long way but I was surprised to not see many guys want to make the running, I saw the opportunity and I took it," Watters said. "They gave me a soft lead for the first mile, we went a mile before we even knew it, all the guys were wrestling with their horses in behind, wasting energy while I wasn't doing a tap in front. Keys kept jumping away. Once we jumped three out, we

Two weeks after a fall at Middleburg sent him to surgery, Graham Watters rides Keys Discount (top) and Mission North to victory at the Virginia Gold Cup.

quickened into the turn, when I straightened out and I gave him a click, he arrived on the bridle, I was like, 'Nothing beats this horse.' "

Nothing did. Keys Discount, purchased for $2,000 by the late Gordie Keys as a yearling at Timonium, earned his third timber victory and second timber stakes since joining Fisher's barn last spring.

"He blew me away," Watters said. "He's a nice one for the future. Timber racing has changed a bit, we've lost some of the big heavy hitters, with Schoodic and Mystic Strike, and there's some young horses stepping up. He's a fine replacement for Schoodic."

A two-time winner of the Virginia Gold Cup, Schoodic retired in 2024 as the 11th leading earner in history.

A race later, Watters made it a double by taking the $50,000 Speedy Smithwick Memorial aboard Maryland-bred Mission North. Owned and bred by Mike and Ann Hankin's Northwoods Stable and trained by Fisher, the son of Noble Mission dominated two rivals in the 4-year-old hurdle stakes. A two-time winner over the Laurel Park turf last season, Mission North won by 27 lengths while improving his hurdle record to 2-for-2.

"Homebred, never really spent much time at the racetrack, every day is a learning day. He's going to keep improving. He's cool, jumps great, plenty of turn of foot. He can win going a mile on the flat and 2 ½ miles over jumps," Watters said. "For me, I ended up getting back a week earlier than I planned. I was just riding nice horses, great jumpers, talented horses. There wasn't much of a doubt and I was lucky enough to win two big races 14 days after getting medivacked out."

Those rides were important, but they were still a bridge to Snap Decision. Without his presence, perhaps, Watters lets nature heal his injuries and waits for summer. Perhaps.

"It was an interesting few weeks all right. It was nice to get back on the horse and know there are no doubts that I'm ready to give Snap the ride he needs," Watters said two days before the Iroquois. "With Snap and everything he's done for me, and we've done together. I don't know what else Snap has in his future in racing, but this is definitely the most important ride of my entire career. I wasn't going to miss it."

Snap Decision just missed, finishing second to Abaan in his bid for his fourth Iroquois and even more history. Some things must wait.

■

The Steeplechase Times

Cooling Out

VETERAN WIRES GRADE 1 COMMONWEALTH CUP

By Sean Clancy ■ *Photographs by Douglas Lees*

Jockey Bernie Dalton pointed to trainer Jack Fisher.

"Thanks Jack, he makes an old man like me look good."

Old men doing young things.

Cool Jet (Ire), a 9-year-old, and Dalton, a "young" 56-year-old, teamed up for the first time in the $150,000 Commonwealth Cup-G1 at the Virginia Gold Cup May 3. Cool Jet broke sharply, established a controlling position in the 2⅛-mile stakes, jumped definitively and never looked back. He secured his first Grade 1 win by 7¼ lengths over Noble Anthem (Ire) and Too Friendly (GB). Owned by Riverdee Stable, Cool Jet increased his spring earnings to $100,500.

In an era when horses aren't meant to come back on short rest (ahem, Sovereignty), Cool Jet completed 4¼ miles in seven days. Second in the Good Night Shirt Hurdle Stakes at Foxfield a week earlier, Cool Jet wheeled back and never looked back. Given a green light to go if no one else did, Dalton did exactly that.

"Jump off, go forward and if they give you a soft lead, take it," Dalton said of his instructions. "Down at the start, it was like, 'Anybody going, lads? They're all like, 'I want to be handy. I want to be handy.' I said, 'I'm going.' After I jumped the second, everybody let me have the lead and I basically walked the dog from there. I let the horse dictate. He jumped from fence to fence."

On a day when several horses slipped and fell on the turns, Cool Jet galloped and jumped, a mountain goat on a rock face.

"No anxious moments, it panned out perfect being in front, you were able to pick your own line, that made it so much better for us than everybody else," Dalton said. "You could give your horse every chance to get a grip, and you're not worried about the guy behind you coming up in the inside or the guy on your outside holding you in. You were able to pick the line you want, that made a big difference. Once they get into a rhythm, they get so confident in themselves."

The two-time novice stakes winner won for the fourth time, capitalizing on a busy couple of weeks on the steeplechase circuit. Champion Snap Decision, Temple Gwathmey-G2 runner up Abaan, Foxfield winner Foxy Walk (Ire) and five top-tier Grade 1 horses waited for the Iroquois a week later. Cool Jet and stablemates Welshman and Proven Innocent came back in a week. Grade 1 winner Too Friendly and stakes winner Who's Counting exited the Gwathmey. Noble Anthem made his stakes debut after winning a handicap at Camden. Grade 1 winner Belfast Banter (Ire) returned from a nearly two-year layoff.

"Every one is a little different, this one was very competitive, it was evenly matched," Dalton said of Grade 1 stakes. "A bunch ran the week before against each other, it was like who took the race better and showed up on the day."

James O'Sullivan, aboard at Foxfield, stuck with a prior commitment on Belfast Banter and Dalton was a Monday morning call up.

"To get a spare ride, and a good spare ride, in a Grade 1, man, I'm over the moon," said Dalton, who won the Iroquois on his regular mount Abaan May 10. "When you're a bit older, you appreciate things a lot more."

Bred by Deirdre McGrath, Cool Jet was purchased for €26,000 (about $28,000) by Gerry Hogan Bloodstock at Goffs NH December sale in 2016 and came back to fetch €45,000 from Harold Kirk and Willie Mullins in the Tattersalls Ireland May store sale in 2019. The son of Irish

Cool Jet and Bernie Dalton show the way in the Commonwealth Cup at the Virginia Gold Cup in May.

stallion Jet Away won a bumper in four tries for Mullins before transferring to Pat Boyle and Brian Ellison in England. After three losses by a combined 118 lengths and without a lot of options, Boyle teamed up with Riverdee and Hall of Famer Fisher in the U.S. in 2022. Cool Jet won three out of his first six starts, including two novice stakes before a fall in the Temple Gwathmey in April 2024. He made just two starts last season. The Commonwealth snapped a four-race losing streak and increased his earnings to $255,234.

At the end of the spring season, the title races were as tight as the Preakness stretch run. Led by Cool Jet's Grade 1 win, Riverdee led all owners $178,300, just $500 ahead of Bruton Street-US. Riding a one-horse train of $250,000 Iroquois winner Abaan, Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners sat in third. Powerhouses Irv Naylor and Leipers Fork rounded out the top five.

Fifteen-time champion Jack Fisher led all trainers with 11 wins, just one ahead of three-time champion Leslie Young and Kathy Neilson. Mark Beecher enjoyed a strong spring with seven winners. Tom Garner and Todd McKenna were tied with five.

A new name reached the top of the jockey standings. Evan Dwan doubled at Radnor to pull into a one-win lead over Graham Watters, Gerard Galligan and Dan Nevin. Stephen Mulqueen, Freddie Procter and Dalton were tied with six. Dalton led all jockeys in earnings with $456,950.

The Dalton duo Abaan and China Beach climbed to the top of the earnings list with big wins at the Iroquois meet (more on that in the July magazine). Abaan pocketed $168,000 and China Beach earned $120,000 through May. Snap Decision, Cool Jet and Keys Discount completed the top five.

Next stop, Laurel Park. The jumpers return to the Maryland oval for the first time since 2000. An allowance hurdle and a maiden hurdle will kick off the summer season June 15. Happy Father's Day!

After Laurel, the steeplechase circuit heads to lucrative programs at Colonial Downs and Saratoga. ■

A Breed Apart

FREQUENT PEDIGREE CROSS GETS ANOTHER SUCCESS IN FORE HARP

By Paul Halloran

When Katarica Disco would see Weigelia led into the breeding shed, do you think she wondered, him again?

The broodmare and stallion certainly needed no introduction, their business matings having produced 10 foals who became winning racehorses. That's right: 10 winners from the same breeding.

"This mare and Weigelia were unstoppable," said Nicole Martin, farm manager at St. Omer's Farm, where Katarica Disco is enjoying a well-deserved retirement. "Why would they breed her to anyone else?"

After her first breeding session with Crypto Star in 2008 – which produced Cryptic Kate, a three-time winner – Katarica Disco enjoyed a monogamous relationship with Weigelia, a $1 million earner on the track purchased by Chip and Barbara Wheeler as a stallion prospect in 2009.

The latest stakes winner from the pair is Fore Harp, who took the King T. Leatherbury Stakes at Laurel Park April 19 in his first start of the year. Owned by Glenn Bennett's LC Racing (a common occurrence with the progeny of Weigelia and Katarica Disco), James Bonner and trainer Butch Reid, Fore Harp improved his career record to 31-7-6-6 with $449,695 in earnings.

A turf-sprinting gelding bred by St. Omer's and purchased for $80,000 at the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale, Fore Harp broke from the rail and led at every call in the Leatherbury, winning by 1¾ lengths under Abner Adorno.

"He's seven and he's as good as ever," said Bennett, who started his ownership journey in 2012 with a group he led which included champion boxer Bernard Hopkins, former Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Shane Victorino and former Eagles player Todd Herremans. "It's the same story as most of them. Whenever a sale is coming, they're No. 1 on our list."

That has proven to be a profitable strategy for Bennett, who has owned at least a half-dozen horses out of Katarica Disco.

"If I had a whole farm filled with them I would actually make money in this sport," he cracked.

Reid is LC Racing's go-to trainer, dating to the first horse he sent him, Fat Kat – by Weigelia out of Katarica Disco, but you probably figured that out already – in 2014. She won nine times and earned $423,318 in 29 starts.

The most successful horse to come from that pedigree is Smooth B, an ageless wonder who has earned more than $1 million for LC Racing and finished second (by a nose) in a Laurel allowance May 4. Foaled in 2015, Smooth B (not a gelding) has started 64 times with 12 wins, 14 seconds and nine thirds. The ultra-durable bay has run in the Marshall Jenney Handicap at Parx five times – with two wins, a second and two thirds – and in the Turf Monster the last three years, finishing second in the Grade 3 in 2023 and winning an off-the-turf (ungraded) edition in 2024.

Bennett also scored with Disco Rose, a $25,000 Timonium fall yearling in 2014, who may have been winless in stakes races (0-for-16), but was graded stakes-placed and finished in the money 17 times in 36 starts while earning $449,280. Bennett paid $52,000 at the same sale in 2020 for Disco Ebo, a 6-year-old mare who has 13 wins in 32 starts, five stakes, including Laurel's Primonetta a week before Fore Harp's score, and $797,694 in the bank.

"They're all durable," said Bennett, a longtime partner of Chuck Zacney, who races under the Cash is King nomencla-

JERRY DZIERWINSKI

Fore Harp, one of four stakes winner for Weigelia and Katarica Disco, returns after the King T. Leatherbury.

ture. "With this breeding, one after the other they just keep getting better. They run forever."

Proving nobody's perfect, in 2022 Bennett spent $110,000 for Harp's Hot Corner, the last foal from the Weigelia–Katarica Disco mating. After the gelding was winless in three maiden special weight races, Reid ran him in a $25,000 maiden claimer at Parx Oct. 15 last year. He won, but was claimed by trainer Jamie Ness. Since then he has won seven of eight in starter and allowance company and has earned more than $250,000.

"That was a mistake," Bennett said. "Not much else to say."

You can't win 'em all.

Pink Princess, the third-highest earning of the Weigelia–Katarica Disco progeny at $572,135, was claimed by Reid for LC Racing at one point. She finished her career in 2019 with trainer Michael Moore.

Combined, Katarica Disco's 11 foals have earned more than $4.3 million (through May 15).

Sue and Stephen Quick bought St. Omer's Farm in Forest Hill, Md., in 1976. Two years later, they bought their first broodmare, 13-year-old Pilgrim's Pride, paying $5,400 for the Virginia-bred.

Pilgrim's Pride is the fifth dam of Fore Harp.

"It's been a fun ride," said Sue Quick, whose husband passed away in 2019. "All the old ones are here on the farm – including me."

Pilgrim's Pride's first foal for the Quicks was a daughter of North Sea they named Kattegat's Pride. She was a three-time Maryland-bred champion who earned $511,812. Kattegat's Pride was bred twice to 1985 Kentucky Derby-G1 winner Spend a Buck and produced two winners, one the 1988 filly Kattebuck. The dam of nine foals, seven winners, including

"I have three in the barn right now. Smooth B, Disco Ebo and Fore Harp. I guess we developed a knack for picking out the right one."

– Trainer Butch Reid, about the offspring of Weigelia and Katarica Disco

millionaire Silmaril, Kattebuck had one non-starter, her first foal, a daughter of Belmont Stakes-G1 winner Caveat named Legal Kat. Katarica Disco, by Disco Rico, is out of Legal Kat.

Ask those who have had a hand in the Weigelia–Katarica Disco success story if they have a theory on why that combination has been so prolific and you get a similar answer.

"I have no idea," said Chip Wheeler, Sue Quick's son, who runs WynOaks, where Weigelia stands, with his wife, Barbara. "We never know how they're going to turn out."

"It's hard to say," said Reid, who has trained eight of the offspring and has a 2-year-old from the family in the wings. "They're all very solid and have long careers. They're durable. Weigelia puts that into them."

Wheeler said Weigelia, now 24, is covering about 20 mares per year, though his book never got much higher than 30.

"He hasn't changed a bit," Wheeler said. "There's no fat on him. The babies all look like him."

And, yes, the people on the farm are well aware of the stallion's successful progeny, which include Beren, a seven-time stakes winner and graded stakes-placed earner of $944,890 out of St. Omer's home-bred Silmaril owned by St. Omer's and Christoper Feifarek and trained by Reid. Beren joined his sire in the WynOaks stud barn for 2025.

"We follow all of them," Wheeler said. "It's almost like they're your horses still. We've had a lot of luck with him."

Considering how well the Katarica Disco foals have turned out, Wheeler is surprised they did not draw higher bids at the yearling sales.

"It's almost a guarantee," he said. "Butch has done really well with them."

"I have three in the barn right now," Reid said. "Smooth B, Disco Ebo and Fore Harp. I guess we developed a knack for picking out the right ones."

If that were a test, when it came to selecting the sons and daughters of Weigelia and Katarica Disco, it was like having the answers ahead of time.

Springing forth

The Preakness Preview Day card April 19 featured four additional stakes.

In the $150,000 Federico Tesio, RKTN Racing's **Pay Billy** earned a spot in the Preakness Stakes-G1 with a 1½-length win as the slight favorite in a field of 10. Trained by Mike Gorham, the son of Improbable won for the third time (in four starts) this year and fourth overall. A month before the Tesio, he won Laurel's Private Terms.

In the filly equivalent, the $150,000 Weber City Miss, Golden Lion Racing's **Complexity Jane** made her pace work stand up to score by three-quarters of a length over Reply, who was a head in front of Moon Cache, as trainer Brittany Russell went 1-2 in the 1⅛-mile stakes. The Complexity filly won for the third time in as many starts, all this year, after being purchased by Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds for $170,000 as a 2-year-old.

Maryland-bred **Nineteenamendment** won the $100,000 Dahlia, a 1-mile turf stakes for fillies and mares, in her stakes debut. Trained by Mike Trombetta for the estate of Larry Johnson, the daughter of Constitution and the Indian Charlie mare Magger Bags won her second straight after taking a Gulfstream Park allowance in March.

Signator became a stakes winner in the $100,000 Henry S. Clark, his second start (and win) on the turf for trainer Shug McGaughey. A $1.7 million 2-year-old purchase in 2022, Signator made the first 12 starts of his career on dirt – winning three times – before an eight-month break and a turf return at Tampa Bay Downs March 2. He won that with a late charge and did the same in the Clark.

The 12-race card on April 19 handled $5.5 million in wagers, a high since the new Maryland Jockey Club took over management in January and nearly double the 2024 handle on the same card. Turf racing returned April 18 with Baby Oscar upsetting a $16,000 maiden claimer for trainer Niall Saville off a 225-day layoff.

Russell secured her sixth Maryland training title, besting Jamie Ness by 16-11 for the month-long Laurel spring meet which ended May 4. Jaime Rodriguez earned his seventh riding title, edging Mychel Sanchez and Sheldon Russell 14-11. A 34-year-old native of Puerto Rico, Rodriguez won year-end titles in Maryland in 2023 and 2024. Euro Stable led all owners with five wins, one better than the partnership of Madison Avenue Racing Stable, Morris Kernan Jr. and Jagger Inc. ■

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— In Memoriam —

Sonny Via

Thoroughbred owner Harold "Sonny" A. Via Jr., whose Maryland-bred steeplechaser Good Night Shirt won two Eclipse Awards and earned a spot in the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, died March 24. He was 94.

A native of Charlottesville, Va., Via briefly attended the University of Virginia before enlisting in the United States Navy and serving four years including time on the aircraft carrier USS Antietam. Via rode horses as a child and foxhunted with the Farmington Hunt. He worked in the casualty commercial insurance business while living in Richmond and Virginia Beach before retiring to Hob Knob Farm in Free Union, Va., in the mid-1980s.

Sonny and Ann Via's first ownership foray came as part of a syndicate in 1989. So Eager won two races for the group. By 1998, they had their own silks and by 2007 they won a National Steeplechase Association owners' championship thanks to stable star Good Night Shirt. The Vias and their champion repeated in 2008. The chestnut son of Concern retired in 2009 with a dozen steeplechase victories and $1,006,493 earned. He is the only steeplechaser to be named Maryland-bred Horse of the Year. One of just three horses to break into the seven-figure category by American jump earnings, the Jack Fisher trainee joined racing's Hall of Fame in 2017.

"What a ride he took us on," Via said of Good Night Shirt at the Hall of Fame induction ceremony. "To be fortunate enough to be associated with a horse the quality of Good Night Shirt was truly a blessing, You don't see ones like him come along very often. Good Night Shirt was my once-in-a-lifetime horse."

Other Via runners included hurdle stakes winners Welshman and Tricky Me, Grade 1-placed Hinterland (Fr) and timber horse Mr Bombastic (Ger).

Via was predeceased by Ann, his wife of 62 years, daughter Alice (Reidy), and granddaughter Ashley. He is survived by his sister Constance Via; sons Peyton (Karen) and Michael (Debbie), and daughter Mary Via Cuoco (Mark); six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many friends, especially Tommy Keith, Sharon Tate, Thomas Shifflett and Anne Bowen.

Via spent decades working on and restoring vintage automobiles and restored two farmhouses. Memorial donations may be sent to Hospice of the Piedmont, National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in Saratoga or a charity of your choice.

Lana Wright

Horsewoman Lana Wright, an Olympic equestrian, driving competitor and Thoroughbred owner/breeder who touched numerous aspects of the horse world in the Mid-Atlantic and beyond, died April 23 at age 85.

The Chesapeake City, Md., resident grew up foxhunting, riding and following the racing success of her mother Allaire duPont's Woodstock Farm and Bohemia Stable (breeder and owner of racing Hall of Famer Kelso and numerous other standouts).

In 1964, Wright competed in the Olympic three-day eventing competition in Tokyo, Japan, and, as the first female to ride in Olympic three-day eventing, helped the United States bring home a team silver medal. Decades later, in 1991, she was a member of the U.S. pair driving team that won a gold medal at the World Driving Championship held in Austria.

She later competed in equestrian endurance events and assisted the creation and success of numerous horse events in a variety of disciplines. Wright is a member of the U.S. Eventing Association Hall of Fame and received the U.S. Equestrian Federation's lifetime achievement award in 2015.

She touched countless lives by sharing her love of horses, knowledge and property to encourage young equestrians through local and national efforts of the U.S. Pony Club. She was never happier than when taking her daughter and grandchildren on a picnic trail ride on horseback at Fair Hill where she devoted hours designing and building combined driving and endurance riding courses for Fair Hill International.

Wright is survived by her daughter Lucy Dunne (Michael) of Reading, Vt., and three grandchildren. She was predeceased by her parents Richard C. and Allaire duPont, brother Richard duPont Jr., husband Dr. William Wright (an equine veterinarian) and daughter Beale Morris.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made payable to Fair Hill International, Inc., and sent in care of R.T. Foard Funeral Home, P.A., P.O. Box 248 Rising Sun, Md., 21911.

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Jumping for timber joy at Hunt Cup, Gold Cup

By Joe Clancy

Ask a simple question such as, "When was the last time that happened?" around Thoroughbred racing and there's no telling where the search for an answer might lead.

This year, Maryland-breds won the historic Maryland Hunt Cup and Virginia Gold Cup timber stakes and prompted the aforementioned question. The 4-mile races go back to 1894 and 1922, respectively, so plenty of history exists to be uncovered.

So, what's the answer?

Ten years ago.

In 2015, Raven's Choice won the Hunt Cup while Grinding Speed triumphed a week later in the Gold Cup. Other doubles include 2012 – Twill Do and Incomplete; 2001 – Solo Lord and Ironfist; 1989 – Uncle Merlin and Call Louis; and 1964 – Jay Trump and Moon Rock.

Beyond that, there are no guarantees. Research gets more difficult as historic charts don't list the state where horses were foaled. Just one horse bred in Maryland, Make Me a Champ (2002 Hunt Cup, 2005 Gold Cup) won both – as far as we can tell – and the known Maryland-bred Hunt Cup winners (see Past Time) don't seem to line up with Maryland-bred Gold Cup winners.

But it's a wonder it happened at all. Clearly there was a time when people did, but nobody really strives to breed timber horses. No, they just happen naturally or sometimes by complete accident.

This year's Maryland-bred doublers fall into the latter category.

Bred by Larry Johnson and trained by Mike Trombetta on the flat, Road to Oz made his first start in a 5½-furlong dirt race that lasted 1:03.15. His Hunt Cup victory spanned 32 furlongs and lasted 8:19.20. The son of Quality Road won going a mile on the dirt. Steeplechase trainer Mark Beecher claimed the gray gelding for $5,000 out of a third in a 1 1/16-mile dirt race.

Pedigree had a little to do with it.

"I didn't care who he was by," the trainer said after Road to Oz won his first timber race in 2021. "He walked into the paddock and I was like, 'What's that horse?' He was just a big, beautiful horse. My eye will always go back to a show-jumper, that type of horse and that was him."

Beecher actually missed Road to Oz the first time he saw him, as the trainer had already filled out the one claim slip he had for another horse. After a few weeks, and even a little pedigree study, Beecher was back.

"When I did my research, I was like, 'This is all long.' I love Mizzen Mast and Quality Road. Obviously he's not doing the job he was bred to do but he's been super."

Quality Road won going 1⅛ miles and his progeny average more than 7 furlongs as a winning distance. Dam Miz Magician only raced twice and produced mainly sprint winners. One other foal, Street Miz, won a race longer than 6 ½ furlongs. Miz Magician's dam Magical Meadow produced Street Magician, who won stakes at 6 furlongs and 5½ furlongs (setting a Presque Isle Downs track record in the latter) and became a stallion. His foals average less than 6 furlongs for a winning distance.

Like many of Johnson's best horses, Road to Oz hails from the gut-feeling purchase of Ran's Chick for $2,400 at Timonium in 1978. She never raced, but Johnson made her a broodmare and she and her daughters shaped the breeders' program. Active runners Future Is Now (a Grade 2-winning turf sprinter), Mindframe (a Grade 1 winner at 7 furlongs) and Call Another Play (a stakes winner going two turns on dirt) are part of that family.

Despite being purchased – and named for – steeplechase enthusiast Gordie Keys (who loved a bargain), Virginia Gold Cup winner Keys Discount wasn't really destined for steeplechasing either.

Douglas Lees (10)

2025: Road to Oz (top) and Keys Discount

2015: Raven's Choice (top) and Grinding Speed

2012: Twill Do (top) and Incomplete

Peter Winants (2)

2001: Solo Lord (top) and Ironfist

1989: Uncle Merlin (top) and Call Louis

1964: Jay Trump (top) and Moon Rock

Breeder Bryan Minnich had a season to stallion Medal Count (a son of distance sire Dynaformer) but was short a mare until he acquired Divertimento from his friend Gary Mitchell. A daughter of Rizzi and the Private Account mare Private Fun, Divertimento has produced seven other winners in the U.S., all on the flat and all at lower-tier tracks.

Keys Discount looked to be headed somewhere similar after bringing $2,000 from Keys at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale in 2020. The dark bay finished second for a $24,000 claiming price on the turf at Laurel Park in 2022 and was second again over hurdles that fall at Shawan Downs. Switched to timber for new owner Dolly Fisher last year, he has won three of five starts since, including both tries this year – the $30,000 Middleburg Hunt Cup stakes in April

and the $100,000 Gold Cup May 3 – for the owner's son, trainer Jack Fisher.

Minnich grew up near Penn National Race Course in Annville, Pa., and followed his grandparents, parents and uncle (Clarence, a trainer) into racing. With his father, Minnich co-owned Hold to Fashion, the dam of Grade 1 winner Peace Rules. He moved to a farm in Paris, Ky., 10 years ago but foals his mares in Maryland to take advantage of breeding incentives. Keys Discount generated some money for his breeder with an in-state timber win at Shawan Downs last year, but notoriety will have to do as a payoff thus far in 2025.

"I've been in this my whole entire life, but it pays me back so much especially with nice horses like that," said Minnich, who has never seen a steeplechase race live. "He comes up on my [electronic] stable. I don't know too much about steeplechase racing, but it's awesome to see him doing well without a doubt. When I saw the result said Gold Cup, it made me think it was an important race. It's very rewarding and you're happy for the horse to find something like that."

The Maryland-bred successes come with some sadness. Road to Oz's breeder and former owner Johnson died in February. Keys Discount's original purchaser Keys died in July 2023. Johnson wasn't in the steeplechase business, far from it; Keys was, for sure.

Both would have been proud of their horses. ❧

Double Dippers

Maryland-bred victories in the Maryland Hunt Cup and Virginia Gold Cup in the same year *(with pedigrees)*. **-Based on available materials.*

Year	Race	Winner	Breeder
2025	MHC	**Road to Oz** *Quality Road-Miz Magician, Mizzen Mast*	R. Larry Johnson
	VGC	**Keys Discount** *Medal Count-Divertimento, Rizzi*	Bryan Minnich
2015	MHC	**Raven's Choice** *Dance With Ravens-Millashand, Regal Intention*	Cary Jackson
	VGC	**Grinding Speed** *Grindstone-Cozelia, Cozzene*	Alan Kline and family
2012	MHC	**Twill Do** *Yarrow Brae-A Little Wild, Wild Again*	Tom and Chris Bowman
	VGC	**Incomplete** *Press Card-Sioux Lady, Poker*	Hugo Procopio
2001	MHC	**Solo Lord** *Assault Landing-Lady Demon, Solo Performance*	Waverly On Chester
	VGC	**Ironfist** *Iron-Miss List, List*	Oatland Farm
1989	MHC	**Uncle Merlin** *Easy Gallop-Aunt Sheila, *Mystic II*	Vivian Rall
	VGC	**Call Louis** *Ecole Etage-Via Breeze, Icecapade*	Robert Meyerhoff
1964	MHC	**Jay Trump** *Tonga Prince-Be Trump, *Bernborough*	Jay Sensenich
	VGC	**Moon Rock** **Hunters Moon IV-Rocky Wes, *Piping Rock*	Mrs. Charles Lewis

2025 NSA Maryland timber results

MARYLAND HUNT CUP. Glyndon, Md., April 26.
4 miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $100,000. Time: 8:19.20. Margin: ¾. 1-Daniel Baker's ROAD TO OZ (gr./ro.g., 10, Quality Road—Miz Magician, by Mizzen Mast); bred by R. Larry Johnson in Md.; trainer Mark Beecher; jockey Conor Tierney. 2-Irvin Naylor's Withoutmoreado (Ire); Kathy Neilson; Freddie Procter. 3-Armata Stable's Goodoldtimes (Ire); Mark Beecher; Dan Nevin. Also ran: Monbeg Stream (Ire), Blackhall (Ire), Rocket Star Red, Mr. Fine Threads (fell), Great Road (fell), Queens Empire (Ire) (lost rider).

GRAND NATIONAL. Butler, Md., April 19.
Grand National Timber Stakes, 3¼ miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $35,000. Time: 6:35.20. Margin: 1½. 1-Michael Smith's WRESTLINGWITHRAE (IRE) (b.g., 7, Snow Sky—Moody Queen, by Scorpion-Ire); bred by James Kirwan in Ireland; trainer Leslie Young; jockey Jordan Canavan. 2-Armata Stable's Goodoldtimes (Ire); Mark Beecher; Dan Nevin. 3-Riverdee Stable's Queens Empire (Ire); Jack Fisher; Virginia Korrell. Also ran: Wagner (Ire), Great Road.

Maiden timber, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $15,000. Time: 6:21.40. Margin: 10¾. 1-Bruton Street-US' TRACK AND TRACE (IRE) (b.g., 8, Mahler—Princess Bella, by Presenting); bred by Martin Doyle in Ireland; trainer Mark Beecher; jockey Dan Nevin. 2-Hey Teacher Partners' Hey Teacher (GB); Kathy Neilson; Conor Tierney. 3-Frank Bonsal Jr.'s Blackstair Rocco (Ire); Willie Dowling; Elizabeth Scully. Also ran: Hermann Clermont (Fr), Sorolla, Make a Stand, Brave Deacon, Straw Into Gold (pulled up), Largy Legacy (Ire) (pulled up), Itsknownasthebern (lost rider).

Benjamin H. Murray Memorial, allowance timber (NW2), 3¼ miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $15,000. Time: 6:32.80. Margin: 8½. 1-Hard Game LLC's HARD GAME (b.g., 7, Hard Spun—Grand Slam Girl, by Grand Slam); bred by Castle Park Farm, Jerry Adamany & Godolphin in Ky.; trainer Kathy Neilson; jockey Freddie Procter. 2-Greenlights'The Butler Yates (Ire); Leslie Young; Jordan Canavan. 3-Lucy Goelet's Rocket Star Red; Mark Beecher; Brett Owings. Also ran: Huyana, Potus, Blackhall (Ire).

Western Run Plate, allowance timber, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur/apprentice jockeys. $15,000. Time: 6:17.80. Margin: 9. 1-Armata Stables' IMPERIAL ASSASSIN (IRE) (b.g., 7, Imperial Monarch—Aguida, by Kahyasi); bred by Parkville Stud in Ireland; trainer Kathy Neilson; jockey Dan Nevin. 2-Leipers Fork Steeplechase's Fast Vision (Fr); Leslie Young; Jordan Canavan; 3-Oakdene Stables' Storm Team; Willie Dowling; Justin Batoff. Also ran: Paddy's Crown, Chosen Mate (Ire) (pulled up), City of Grace (pulled up).

MY LADY'S MANOR. Monkton, Md., April 13.
My Lady's Manor Timber Stakes, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $50,000. Time: 6:20.00. Margin: 7½. 1-Daniel Colhoun, Achsah O'Donovan and Harvey Goolsby III's BOGEY'S IMAGE (ch.g., 8, Imagining—Casablanca Lily-Ire, by Hurricane Run-Ire); bred by South Branch Equine in Md.; trainer Joe Davies; jockey Teddy Davies. 2-Michael Smith's Wrestlingwithrae (Ire); Leslie Young; Jordan Canavan. 3-Daniel Doane's Theda's Boy; Kevin Boniface; Brett Owings. Also ran: Withoutmoreado (Ire), Include It, Shootist (pulled up), Storm Team (pulled up).

John Rush Streett Memorial, maiden timber, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $20,000. Time: 6:23.40. Margin: 4. 1-Motley Crew Racing's MARCEL MAGIC (IRE) (b.g., 5, Marcel—Annaroe, by Beneficial-GB); bred by Jack Rearden in Ireland; trainer Kathy Neilson; jockey Freddie Procter. 2-Hey Teacher Partners' Hey Teacher (GB); Kathy Neilson; Eric Poretz. 3-Michael Smith's Project Two (Ire); Leslie Young; Jordan Canavan. Also ran: Lightning Ridge (pulled up), Left Blank (pulled up), Contre Ordre (Fr) (pulled up).

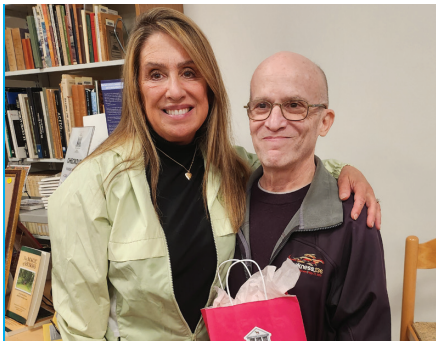
Thomas H. Voss Memorial, maiden timber, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur jockeys. $20,000. Time: 6:22.60. Margin: 7½. 1-Runnymoore Racing's ETERNAL STORY (FR) (b.g., 8, Sidestep—Earth Affair, by Acatenango); bred by Earl Haras Du Taillis & Bernhard Wenger in France; trainer Mark Beecher; jockey Dan Nevin. 2-Riverdee Stable's Potus; Jack Fisher; Virginia Korrell. 3-Kiplin Hall's Take Profit; Willie Dowling; Teddy Davies. Also ran: Hard Game, Anzio, The Kid Rocks (pulled up).

John D. Schapiro Memorial, allowance timber, 3 miles, 5&up, amateur/apprentice jockeys. $15,000. Time: 6:25.80. Margin: 1½. 1-Armata Stables' MR. FINE THREADS (b.g., 12, Sightseeing—Seven Counties, by Wayne County-Ire); bred by William Harris in Md.; trainer Joe Davies; jockey Sophie O'Brien. 2-Tuscany Racing's Monbeg Stream (Ire); Leslie Young; Jordan Canavan. 3-Daniel Baker's Road to Oz; Mark Beecher; Conor Tierney. Also ran: Crealion (Fr) (pulled up).

MHBA, Maryland Horse Library help celebrate Preakness Festival

The Maryland Horse Breeders Association and Maryland Horse Library and Education Center celebrated the 150th Preakness Stakes. In conjunction with Preakness Festival, activities included the Maryland Horse Farm Tour May 11 (bottom row: center, right). May's library exhibit featured the collection of Jay Williamson (left).

Library programs May 8 and 9 brought Billy Boniface and Donnie Miller (center row, left) in to discuss 1983 Preakness winner Deputed Testamony, the last Maryland-bred to wear the Black-Eyed Susans. The Boniface family bred, trained and owned the Preakness winner, and was with him his entire 32 years; Miller was 20 when he rode him to victory. That evening also featured the ABC Sports telecast of the race. Karin De Francis and John Scheinman (center row, right), told stories about their connection to the Preakness prior to the showing of the Eclipse Award-winning film *The Preakness: An American Classic*, which made its debut in 2000. The third annual book sale, and first sale of equine art, was a success; Carol Fox (center row, center) came in to sign her book *Three Gallant Hearts*. The library hosted the Swedish Jockey Club (bottom row, left) as part of a tour learning about Maryland and its horses. ❧



Romeo wins first juvenile race of 2025

Romeo delivered in Maryland's first 2-year-old race while became the first Maryland-bred juvenile winner this year when running away in the stretch by 10¼ lengths as the odds-on favorite May 3 at Laurel Park.

Trained by Jerry Robb and racing for Joe Lloyd's Lucky 7 Stables, Romeo went off at 4-5 in the six-horse field of first-time starters. With Xavier Perez up, the dark bay colt broke well and set a pressured pace outside Maryland-bred and -sired Fortune Hill (by first-year sire Fortune Ticket) before taking over on the turn. Romeo completed 4½ furlongs in :52.55. Fortune Hill finished third.

Bred by John Davison, Romeo is by Honor A. P. out of the Not For Love mare Fancy Love and is from the family of 2-year-old champion Midshipman and multiple Grade 1 winner Frosted.

Romeo was a $14,000 RNA at last fall's Fasig-Tipton Midlantic yearling sale. The win was worth $32,430. ❧

Maryland-bred Stakes Winners

Nineteenamendment gets first stakes win in Dahlia

Jim McCue

Taking on stakes company for the first time, 5-year-old Nineteenamendment put away seven foes in Laurel Park's $100,000 Dahlia Stakes April 19, a 1-mile turf contest for fillies and mares.

Campaigned by the family of late breeder Larry Johnson, and trained by Mike Trombetta, Nineteenamendment shipped from Florida to Fair Hill following a winter campaign. While the majority of her 16 races have been on the turf (a record of 10-3-4-2), the daughter of Constitution came in off an allowance score on Gulfstream's synthetic surface in March.

Sent off the 3.70-1 third choice, Nineteenamendment was a bit rank early while rated by Paco Lopez. She launched a three-wide bid on the far turn, took command inside the eighth pole and won by 1½ lengths in 1:36.63 over firm turf.

Trombetta said she was pointed to the Dahlia because she had "exhausted our allowance conditions, now she's got to do stakes from here on in. I'm over the top with how well she ran. I was hoping to hit the board. I honestly didn't think I was good enough."

A winner on dirt, synthetic and turf, Nineteenamendment has five wins and seven placings while earning $311,925.

Nineteenamendment is from a different family than Johnson's foundation mare Ran's Chick. He bought her dam, multiple stakes-placed winner Magger Bags (by Indian Charlie) for $75,000 at the 2008 Keeneland November sale as a 3-year-old.

Magger Bags made 10 starts for Johnson and Lynn Contino and won a Presque Isle Downs allowance in May 2009. She retired in January 2010 after racing at nine tracks coast-to-coast, won three of 21 starts, and earned $135,087.

Offered at the 2010 Keeneland November sale while carrying her first foal (by Hard Spun), Magger Bags was a $90,000 RNA. Her first foal was her only non-winner from seven starters. Her second-richest runner is Maryland-bred Quality Road gelding Winning Road, an earner of $157,858 who sold as a yearling for $100,000 at Keeneland, and a 2-year-old at the Fasig-Tipton Florida sale for $260,000. Magger Bags has been bred to Johnson's home stallion True Valour (Ire) the past two years, but has not had a reported foal since her Global Campaign colt Global Giant in 2022. He recorded his first win April 9 at Tampa Bay Downs.

Nineteenamendment is one of four stakes winners bred by Johnson this year, joining Future Is Now, Mindframe and Road to Oz. ❧

Maryland Fund Report

Bonuses paid for races run
in February 2025 at Maryland tracks

Breeder bonuses

Includes the additional 10 percent Maryland-sired bonus for winners of maiden races, initiated Jan. 1 during the 2022 Laurel winter meet. That bonus is reflected in the second figure earned for the race.

A. Delaperriere Stables LLC—Docsgotallthecandy: Feb. 15, 2nd race, $990.

Anchor and Hope Farm Inc.—Sacred Thunder: Feb. 22, 8th race, $2,250. She'sarollingstone: Feb. 23, 6th race, $1,305. ($3,555)

Lorna L. Baker and Thomas H. Michaels Jr.—Third Tuesday: Feb. 2, 8th race, $495.

Barak Farm—Hateful: Feb. 8, 7th race, $405; Feb. 23, 1st race, $2,970. Kitty's Son: Feb. 1, 9th race, $2,115. Let's Go J J: Feb. 8, 2nd race, $1,057.50. Safe Trust: Feb. 7, 4th race, $6,615; Feb. 22, 7th race, $4,500. ($17,662.50)

Barak Farm and Dinos Thoroughbreds LLC—Isabella's Glory: Feb. 23, 6th race, $652.50.

Bell Gable Stable—Can Do: Feb. 2, 7th race, $922.50.

Paul W. Berube, Karen Linnell and Spinnaker Hill Farm—Quint's Brew: Feb. 15, 8th race, $13,500.

Best A Luck Farm LLC and Best Foot Forward Holdings Inc.—Suremeanttoobe: Feb. 23, 3rd race, $2,115.

David Benjamin Bloom—Wildhunch: Feb. 14, 1st race, $4,050.

Richard F. Blue Jr.—Chattolanee Spring: Feb. 21, 4th race, $1,057.50.

Bonita Farm—Hittheroadjak: Feb. 15, 7th race, $2,250.

Charles Bonuccelli—Roll On Jesse: Feb. 8, 4th race, $1,102.50.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman, Rebecca Davis and Dr. Brooke Bowman—Mopo: Feb. 7, 2nd race, $1,845.

Bowman and Higgins Stable—Holy Fit: Feb. 7, 2nd race, $922.50. Master of None: Feb. 9, 6th race, $810. Serendipitymonday: Feb. 23, 3rd race, $1,057.50 ($2,790)

BTR Racing Inc.—Buds Island: Feb. 23, 8th race, $3,510.

Deborah A. Butts—Gilda's Girl: Feb. 1, 5th race, $990; Feb. 28, 2nd race, $1,350. ($2,340)

William Andrew Campbell—Bad Temper: Feb. 7, 5th race, $405.

Louis C. Carrico—Nancy Mary: Feb. 22, 4th race, $922.50.

Wes Carter—El Divino Nino: Feb. 9, 2nd race, $2,970.

Clover Hill Farm Inc.—Notmyfirstrodeo: Feb. 23, 8th race, $1,170.

Clover Hill Racing LLC—Super Needy: Feb. 9, 2nd race, $990.

Sam Cockburn—Tuff Luck: Feb. 14, 9th race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)

Cordelia Stables LLC—Krissi N: Feb. 7, 4th race, $1,102.50.

Country Life Farm and Grecian Maiden LLC—Schrader: Feb. 16, 5th race, $922.50.

Country Life Farm and Huron Racing Ventures, LLC—Sir Mick: Feb. 15, 2nd race, $2,970.

Country Life Farm and Keep Right LLC—Rascallion: Feb. 2, 2nd race, $990; Feb. 21, 9th race, $2,970. ($3,960)

Country Life Farm and Missy Rules LLC—Missy's Map: Feb. 8, 6th race, $990.

Country Life Farm and Real Good Time LLC—Bill of Rights: Feb. 28, 5th race, $3,240.

Country Roads Ltd.—My Flicker: Feb. 14, 6th race, $2,385. Utterly Enchanting: Feb. 8, 7th race, $810. ($3,195)

Daniel C. Crowley and Non Stop Stable—Haileysfirstnotion: Feb. 23, 7th race, $1,080.

Dark Hollow Farm—Stormy Hollow: Feb. 22, 2nd race, $990. Sweet No No: Feb. 9, 8th race, $2,970. ($3,960)

John C. Davison—Dad Joke: Feb. 1, 1st race, $990.

DDRS and Ron Cuneo—Zio Lino: Feb. 21, 1st race, $1,170.

Steve R. Ferguson—Lady Charlotte: Feb. 1, 5th race, $2,970.

Finale Farm and Mr. and Mrs. David Moose—Nick's Notion: Feb. 22, 4th race, $1,845.

Charles A. Frock—Tam Char: Feb. 16, 3rd race, $450.
Glenangus Farm LLC—First Pearl: Feb. 1, 2nd race, $1,170.
Grandview Stable Inc. and Dominick J. Juno—Dolice Vita: Feb. 8, 1st race, $3,240.
Richard J. Hackerman—Lachicafortequila: Feb. 2, 2nd race, $2,970.
Maria M. Haire—Elvis Himself: Feb. 23, 7th race, $2,160. Neolithica: Feb. 9, 5th race, $3,240. Stormy Midnight: Feb. 7, 1st race, $2,970 ($8,370)
Hickory Ridge Farm—All the Hardways: Feb. 8, 4th race, $6,615.
Timothy N. Hopkins—Blo By'em: Feb. 8, 9th race, $1,485.
Kyle M. Horlacher and Charles Blanford—Where's My Chew: Feb. 21, 1st race, $3,510/$1,170. ($4,680)
Michael and Debbie Horning—Princess Lucia: Feb. 21, 3rd race, $495.
Ann B. Jackson—Brewmaster: Feb. 7, 8th race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)
Jagger Inc.—Fitness: Feb. 9, 4th race, $990; Feb. 23, 2nd race, $585. Silverbullettwenty: Feb. 14, 4th race, $2,430. Speedyness: Feb. 15, 7th race, $13,500. ($17,505)
Jagger Inc. and Super C Racing Inc.—Derbyness: Feb. 22, 5th race, $2,205.
Estate of R. Larry Johnson—Coringa: Feb. 8, 2nd race, $6,345. Great Heavens: Feb. 2, 1st race, $5,130. Heard On Thestreet: Feb. 7, 6th race, $2,160. Quit Quay: Feb. 8, 5th race, $990. ($14,625)
Hope Haskell Jones—Moon Cache: Feb. 22, 4th race, $5,535.
Karmac Stables LLC—Prado Road: Feb. 23, 7th race, $6,480.
Kasey K Racing Stable—Lady Sriracha: Feb. 2, 4th race, $4,050/$1,350. Takethemoneyhoney: Feb. 22, 6th race, $6,480. ($11,880)
Carl Lanier—She's No Uncle: Feb. 7, 2nd race, $5,535/$1,845. ($7,380)
James Lee Lawrence II and Lawrence Stables Inc.—My Mamba: Feb. 2, 3rd race, $2,700.
Leaf Stable—Laddie Dance: Feb. 28, 7th race, $832.50.
Estate of Fred T. Lewis Sr. DVM—Celtic Contender: Feb. 15, 8th race, $4,500.
Little Man Farm—Falcon Blue: Feb. 14, 7th race, $922.50.
Kenneth F. Lowe Jr.—Ifeelbadforyouson: Feb. 16, 1st race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)
Mary E. Eppler Racing Stable—Paperback Edition: Feb. 28, 9th race, $990.
Robert T. Manfuso, Katharine M. Voss and Casey J. Randall—Twice Gold: Feb. 21, 2nd race, $855.
MCA Racing Stable LLC—A B C Ya: Feb. 22, 2nd race, $495.
James F. McIngvale—Dathoss: Feb. 2, 3rd race, $450. Restless: Feb. 7, 6th race, $1,080. ($1,530)
Elizabeth M Merryman—Midnight Renegade: Feb. 15, 9th race, $675. Spencer Tiara: Feb. 22, 6th race, $2,160. ($2,835)
Mike Dalton LLC—Quincannon: Feb. 28, 5th race, $540/ Sneaking Suspicion: Feb. 14, 5th race, $990. ($1,530)
Mikelle Farm—True Sunshine: Feb. 9, 5th race, $540.
Murmur Farm—Bold Diversion: Feb. 16, 5th race, $1,845. Bondiva: Feb. 7, 7th race, $1,102.50. Bondiva: Feb. 22, 6th race, $1,080. Imperial Spy: Feb. 7, 8th race, $495. Meg: Feb. 23, 4th race, $1,845. ($6,367.50)
No Guts No Glory Farm—Bad Boy Blaze: Feb. 15, 2nd race, $495; Feb. 28, 3rd race, $990. Bigdaddysboy: Feb. 7, 3rd race, $1,080. Green Eyed Monster: Feb. 2, 7th race, $1,845; Feb. 21, 6th race, $5,535. Itsamonstamash: Feb. 21, 6th race, $1,845. ($11,790)
Clarke Ohrstrom—Granuaile: Feb. 2, 4th race, $675.
David W. Palmer—Kissling: Feb. 28, 3rd race, $495.
Ronald Harris Parker—Malibu Hooch: Feb. 7, 4th race, $2,205.
Parkinson and Goodrich LLC—Chesapeake Dream: Feb. 14, 7th race, $5,535.
Frank A. Perri Jr.—Dwelling Legacy: Feb. 21, 7th race, $1,710. Rina Is Fire: Feb. 22, 9th race, $2,115. ($3,825)
A. Leonard Pineau—Crossland: Feb. 21, 8th race, $1,192.50.
Dr. and Mrs. A. Leonard Pineau—Change My World: Feb. 2, 6th race, $6,345; Feb. 14, 8th race, $2,205. Rapidity: Feb. 14, 1st race, $1,350; Feb. 21, 2nd race, $5,130. ($15,030)
Rolling Meadows Farm—Bond's Belle: Feb. 7, 1st race, $495. Summerinthecountry: Feb. 2, 6th race, $2,115. Summerstateofmind: Feb. 9, 6th race, $405. ($3,015)
Thomas Rooney—Coffeewithchris: Feb. 8, 1st race, $540.
Eric A. Rizer and Nancy M. Rizer—Slam Notion: Feb. 14, 8th race, $6,615.
Frank T. Sample—Onyx Ten: Feb. 22, 7th race, $13,500. Secret Zipper: Feb. 21, 8th race, $7,155. ($20,655)
Shamrock Farm—Barbadian Runner: Feb. 22, 8th race, $13,500.
Sinatra Thoroughbred Racing and Breeding LLC—Autumn in Vermont: Feb. 21, 9th race, $990.
Janice Sinatra—S S Sinatra: Feb. 7, 6th race, $6,480.
St. Patrick's Racing Stable LLC—Irish Nitro: Feb. 22, 2nd race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)
James B. Steele Jr.—Divining Smile: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $742.50.
Super C Racing Inc.—Tetched: Feb. 1, 1st race, $495. Tuned to the Moon: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $1,485. ($1,980)
Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds LLC—Addy's Laddy T N T: Feb. 7, 3rd race, $3,240. Lovely Charm: Feb. 16, 7th race, $1,192.50. ($4,432.50)
The Elkstone Group LLC—Cap Com: Feb. 2, 5th race, $855; Feb. 22, 5th race, $6,615. Order Ofthe Kettle: Feb. 22, 3rd race, $990. ($8,460)
Thornmar Farm LLC—At First Sight: Feb. 16, 3rd race, $900. Born Charmer: Feb. 9, 8th race, $990. Fair Trade: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $4,455/$1,485. General Maximus: Feb. 8, 9th race, $742.50. Joe the Jet: Feb. 2, 1st race, $855; Feb. 16, 2nd race, $1,710. Just the Thing: Feb. 7, 1st race, $990; Feb. 28, 1st race, $495. Little Bit Risky: Feb. 16, 5th race, $5,535. Midsummers Eve: Feb. 28, 1st race, $990. Thorold Miss: Feb. 8, 6th race, $495. ($19,642.50)
Marie Trombetta—Christmas Spirit: Feb. 14, 3rd race, $922.50.
Walter N. Vieser, II—Severn Run: Feb. 21, 1st race, $585.
Katharine Merryman Voss—Divine Works: Feb. 22, 9th race, $1,057.50.
Warning Drums Racing LLC—Arise My Love: Feb. 16, 6th race, $1,170. Diane Lee: Feb. 9, 1st race, $2,970. ($4,140)
Dr. and Mrs. Bruce C. Wells—Running River: Feb. 1, 7th race, $900.
Winding Creek Farm—Whiskey and You: Feb. 21, 5th race, $652.50; Feb. 28, 7th race, $1,665. ($2,317.50)

Stallion bonuses

BARBADOS (Barbadian Runner: Feb. 22, 8th race, $4,500. Falcon Blue: Feb. 14, 7th race, $307.50. Hateful: Feb. 8, 7th race, $135; Feb. 23, 1st race, $990): Shamrock Farm—$5,932.50.
BLOFELD (Blo By'em: Feb. 8, 9th race, $495. Bold Diversion: Feb. 16, 5th race, $615. Bond's Belle: Feb. 7, 1st race, $165. Bondiva: Feb. 7, 7th race, $367.50; Feb. 22, 6th race, $360. Dwelling Legacy: Feb. 21, 7th race, $570. Imperial Spy: Feb. 7, 8th race, $165. Meg: Feb. 23, 4th race, $615. Rina Is Fire: Feb. 22, 9th race, $705): Blofeld Syndicate—$4,057.50.
BOURBON COURAGE (Arise My Love: Feb. 16, 6th race, $390. Malibu Hooch: Feb. 7, 4th race, $735. She'sarollingstone: Feb. 23, 6th race, $435): Bourbon Courage Syndicate—$1,560.
BUFFUM (Quincannon: Feb. 28, 5th race, $180): Northview for Buffum Syndicate.
DESPITE THE ODDS (Utterly Enchanting: Feb. 8, 7th race, $270): Estate of R. Larry Johnson.
DIVINING ROD (Divine Works: Feb. 22, 9th race, $352.50. Divining Smile: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $247.50): Country Life Farm for Divining Rod Syndicate—$600.
FIRST MONDAYS (First Pearl: Feb. 1, 2nd race, $390. Serendipitymonday: Feb. 23, 3rd race, $352.50): R. Thomas Bowman DBA First Mondays Ptnship—$742.50.
FORCE THE PASS (Joe the Jet: Feb. 2, 1st race, $285; Feb. 16, 2nd race, $570): Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC—$855.
FRIESAN FIRE (Whiskey and You: Feb. 21, 5th race, $217.50; Feb. 28, 7th race, $555): Friesan Fire Syndicate—$772.50.
GOLDEN LAD (Addy's Laddy T N T: Feb. 7, 3rd race, $1,080. Buds Island: Feb. 23, 8th race, $1,170. Elvis Himself: Feb. 23, 7th race, $720. Itsamonstamash: Feb. 21, 6th race, $615. Just the Thing: Feb. 7, 1st race, $330; Feb. 28, 1st race, $165. Laddie Dance: Feb. 28, 7th race, $277.50. Lady Sriracha: Feb. 2, 4th race, $1,350. Prado Road: Feb. 23, 7th race, $2,160. Quit Quay: Feb. 8, 5th race, $330. Spencer Tiara: Feb. 22, 6th race, $720. Takethemoneyhoney: Feb. 22, 6th race, $2,160. Twice Gold: Feb. 21, 2nd race, $285. Where's My Chew: Feb. 21, 1st race, $1,170): Golden Lad Syndicate—$12,532.50.
GREAT NOTION (At First Sight: Feb. 16, 3rd race, $300. Great Heavens: Feb. 2, 1st race, $1,710. Haileysfirstnotion: Feb. 23, 7th race, $360. Lady Charlotte: Feb. 1, 5th race, $990. Little Bit Risky: Feb. 16, 5th race, $1,845. Mopo: Feb. 7, 2nd race, $615. My Flicker: Feb. 14, 6th race, $795. Nick's Notion: Feb. 22, 4th race, $615. Slam Notion: Feb. 14, 8th race, $2,205. Sneaking Suspicion: Feb. 14, 5th race, $330. Speedyness: Feb. 15, 7th race, $4,500. Stormy Hollow: Feb. 22, 2nd race, $330. Tam Char: Feb. 16, 3rd race, $150. Tetched: Feb. 1, 1st race, $165. Third Tuesday: Feb. 2, 8th race, $165. Wildhunch: Feb. 14, 1st race, $1,350): Great Notion Syndicate—$16,365.
HOLY BOSS (Brewmaster: Feb. 7, 8th race, $990. Crossland: Feb. 21, 8th race, $397.50. Granuaile: Feb. 2, 4th race, $225. Sacred Thunder: Feb. 22, 8th race, $750. Silverbullettwenty: Feb. 14, 4th race, $810): Holy Boss Syndicate—$3,172.50.
HOPPERTUNITY (Docsgotallthecandy: Feb. 15, 2nd race, $330. Fair Trade: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $1,485): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$1,815.
IMAGINING (Bigdaddysboy: Feb. 7, 3rd race, $360. El Divino Nino: Feb. 9, 2nd race, $990. Summerstateofmind: Feb. 9, 6th race, $135): Imagining Syndicate—$1,485.
IRISH WAR CRY (Born Charmer: Feb. 9, 8th race, $330. Celtic Contender: Feb. 15, 8th race, $1,500. Green Eyed Monster: Feb. 2, 7th race, $615; Feb. 21, 6th race, $1,845. Irish Nitro: Feb. 22, 2nd race, $990. Lovely Charm: Feb. 16, 7th race, $397.50. Tuned to the Moon: Feb. 9, 3rd race, $495): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$6,172.50.
KOBE'S BACK (Dathoss: Feb. 2, 3rd race, $150. Hittheroadjak: Feb. 15, 7th race, $750. My Mamba: Feb. 2, 3rd race, $900): Bonita Farm—$1,800.
LONG RIVER (Chattolanee Spring: Feb. 21, 4th race, $352.50. Running River: Feb. 1, 7th race, $300): Long River Syndicate—$652.50.
MADEFROMLUCKY (Bad Boy Blaze: Feb. 15, 2nd race, $165; Feb. 28, 3rd race, $330. Tuff Luck: Feb. 14, 9th race, $990): Madefromlucky Syndicate—$1,485.
MOSLER (Can Do: Feb. 2, 7th race, $307.50. Moon Cache: Feb. 22, 4th race, $1,845. Quint's Brew: Feb. 15, 8th race, $4,500. Safe Trust: Feb. 7, 4th race, $2,205; Feb. 22, 7th race, $1,500): Mosler Syndicate—$10,357.50.
STREET MAGICIAN (Heard On Thestreet: Feb. 7, 6th race, $720. Onyx Ten: Feb. 22, 7th race, $4,500): Estate of R. Larry Johnson—$5,220.
SUPER NINETY NINE (Bad Temper: Feb. 7, 5th race, $135. Ifeelbadforyouson: Feb. 16, 1st race, $990. Paperback Edition: Feb. 28, 9th race, $330. Super Needy: Feb. 9, 2nd race, $330): Country Life Farm—$1,785.
UNCLE LINO (She's No Uncle: Feb. 7, 2nd race, $1,845. Zio Lino: Feb. 21, 1st race, $390): Northview Stallion Station—$2,235.

Maryland-bred top earners in 2025

(through May 15)

1.	Mindframe $644,800	11.	Green Eyed Monster $101,170
2.	Quint's Brew 260,000	12.	Concrete Faze 94,050
3.	Passion Rules 189,600	13.	Youknownothing 93,450
4.	Safe Trust 158,780	14.	Speedyness 92,000
5.	Future Is Now 147,250	15.	Addy's Laddy T N T .. 90,290
6.	Takethemoneyhoney . 141,770	16.	Coringa 88,780
7.	Barbadian Runner ... 127,245	17.	Call Another Play 88,760
8.	Onyx Ten 123,000	18.	Slam Notion 85,750
9.	Heard On Thestreet .. 115,300	19.	Derbyness 83,990
10.	Nineteenamendment 114,750	20.	Rominski 83,760

Registration questions? Membership inquiries?

Call the MHBA office 410.252.2100 x 129

THE THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER

Post Time

- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - **June 2025** -

In This Issue

Holly Crest Farm honored as Breeder of the Year

2025 Horse Management Seminar

New Jersey-bred Stakes Schedule

TBANJ Membership Application

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Holly Crest Farm honored as TOBA Breeder of the Year

Holly Crest Farm has been named the 2024 Breeder of the Year in New Jersey by the Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association (TOBA). The farm will be honored at TOBA's National Awards Dinner, which will take place in September in Lexington, Ky.

In 2024, horses bred by Holly Crest Farm had 10 wins out of 62 starts, earning a total of $747,479. Notably, among these horses was Sea Streak, who won the $100,000 Long Branch Stakes and the $125,000 Charles J. Hesse III Handicap, for earnings of $218,190.

Additionally, Holly Crest Farm bred Riding Pretty, the 2024 New Jersey-bred Champion Older Female. She won the $85,000 Smart N Classy Handicap by 7½ lengths at 1 mile and the $100,000 Eleven North Handicap going 6 furlongs, both on dirt. She also finished second in the Jersey Girl Handicap, a 1-mile race on turf, while earning $134,180. Another notable homebred from Holly Crest, Speaking, was a repeat winner of the John J. Reilly Handicap at Monmouth Park, rounding out the trio of Monmouth stakes winners for the farm in 2024. Homebred Ship to Shore won the Limehouse Stakes at Gulfstream Park.

Holly Crest Farm is owned by Vincent Annarella, who has been a strong supporter of the New Jersey-bred breeding and racing program since he began breeding horses in 1964.

2024 star homebreds for Holly Crest Farm, from top: Sea Streak, Riding Pretty, Speaking.

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2025 Horse Management Seminar

The Rutgers Equine Science Center virtual 2025 "Horse Management Seminar" webinar series has been uploaded to the Equine Science Center's website, and is available for viewing at https://esc.rutgers.edu/resources/library/multimedia/.

The "Farm Management" session brought together Laura Kenny, Dr. Krishona Martinson, Dr. Betsy Greene, and Anita Thompson to present their research on some of the best management practices for small farm pastures, and toxic plants to keep an eye out for.

Laura Kenny from Penn State University spoke on "Small Farm Pasture Management;" and Dr. Krishona Martinson from the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Betsy Greene and Anita Thompson from the University of Arizona spoke on "Plants Toxic to Horses in the North and South US."

The "Nutrition" session brought together Dr. Jennie Ivey and Dr. Erica Macon, who covered general equine nutrition, as well as delved into specific nutrition considerations for horses with endocrine disease.

Dr. Ivey, from the University of Tennessee, spoke on "Basic Horse Nutrition," and Dr. Macon, from Texas A&M University, spoke on "Specific Nutritional Considerations for Equids with Endocrine Disease."

The "Horse Health & Welfare" session brought together Dr. Alisa Herbst and Dr. Kris Hiney, who looked at research on US Senior Horses, as well as how to evaluate pain in horses while riding.

Dr. Herbst, from Rutgers University, spoke on "Health & Management of US Senior Horses," and Dr. Hiney, from Oklahoma State University, spoke on "Evaluating Pain in your Horse while Riding."

New Jersey-bred Stakes Schedule

Run Date	*Stakes Name*	*Purse*	*Division*	*Distance*
June-1-25	**Smart N Classy Handicap**	**$85,000**	**F & M 3 and up**	**1 mile**
June-8-25	**Friendly Lover Handicap**	**$85,000**	**3 and up**	**1 mile**
July-5-25	**Jersey Girl Handicap**	**$85,000**	**F & M 3 and up**	**1 mile (Turf)**
July-6-25	**Irish War Cry Handicap**	**$85,000**	**3 and up**	**1 mile (Turf)**
Aug-24-25	**Charles Hesse III Handicap**	**$125,000**	**3 and up**	**1 1/16 miles**
Aug-24-25	**NJ Breeders Handicap**	**$100,000**	**3 and up**	**6 furlongs**
Aug-24-25	**Eleven North Handicap**	**$100,000**	**F & M 3 and up**	**6 furlongs**
Sep-13-25	**Pinot Grigio Handicap**	**$85,000**	**F & M 3 and up**	**5 furlongs (Turf)**
Sep-14-25	**Joey P. Handicap**	**$85,000**	**3 and up**	**5 furlongs (Turf)**

THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

Membership Application

Member Information

NAME _____ SS#/FEDERAL I.D.# _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ COUNTY _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Membership Categories

☐ Breeder — A breeder member shall be a person who owns the required interest in a broodmare or registered stallion domiciled in New Jersey; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. A breeder member shall have voting rights.

☐ Owner — An owner member shall be a person who owns a registered New Jersey- bred; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. An owner member will not have voting rights.

☐ Associate — An associate member is a person who is interested in owning, breeding, or racing horses in the State of New Jersey or in fostering economic activity through the breeding, ownership and/or racing of horses in the State of New Jersey. An associate member will not have voting rights.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Membership Dues

A check or money order for $100.00 must accompany this form. Spouses are encouraged to join the **TBANJ** under joint membership status. This fee would total $150.00 per couple. Each spouse must fill out a separate form to accompany the payment. Membership will be effective upon receipt and will be in force each calendar year and must be renewed annually.

THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY
265 Hwy 36
Suite 1R
W. Long Branch, NJ 07764
732-542-8880
njbreds@gmail.com

Maryland Horse
LIBRARY
AND EDUCATION CENTER

Stop by for a visit

Lots going on at the Library!

Regular monthly events include seasonal displays, author talks, our Fourth Mondays Program of panels and speakers on events and history within the state, along with the Howard & Sondra Bender Educational Series covering subjects of interest for equine enthusiasts. Check out our events calendar at **MarylandHorse.com/library**

Located in the heart of historic Reisterstown, this exciting new facility honors the history of horses in Maryland and serves as a hub for learning and collaboration. A research library of over 5,000 books, memorabilia, meeting space, media room and reading areas.

Open M-F, 9-5

321 Main Street, Reisterstown, MD

North Carolina

THOROUGHBRED ASSOCIATION

June 2025

President's message

More Baby news to come.

This month's baby spotlight is from Art Bauer. These two babies are from Bauer Farm (Art Bauer).

Sires are Endorsed and Engage. Also highlighted is the fact that Hartful Hope won again April 28 at Thistledown.

Art, congratulations on the babies and the win!

Looking for a bigger and brighter future for NCTA.

Hitting the Board

April 5 – May 4, 2025

Date	*Horse*	*Track*	*NCTA Connection*	*Finish*
26-Apr	Cairo Caper	Aqueduct	Bill Thompson - Maple Leaf Farn	unplaced
26-Apr	CHAMPAGNE CAMIE	Santa Anita	Bred by Beth Muirhead	WINNER!
26-Apr	DOUBLE TOUGH TIGER	Camarero Race Track	Bred by Beth Muirhead	WINNER!
28-Apr	HARTFUL HOPE	Thistledown	Bred by Art Bauer. Owned by George Ekherdt	WINNER!
2-May	Mom's Martini	Gulfstream Park	Owned by Dan Shea - Shea D Boy's Stable	unplaced
3-May	Termsofengagement	Penn National	Bred by Nancy Shuford	unplaced
3-May	TIZ SWEET EMOTION	Belterra Park	Bred & owned by Denise Walsh	WINNER!
3-May	Colonel Cooper	Belterra Park	Owned by Carolina Cooper	3rd
3-May	Tiz Wicked Strong	Oaklawn Park	Bred by Denise Walsh - Never Better Farm	unplaced
4-May	Contrivance	Woodbine	Bred & owned by William Thompson Jr.	3rd

Race Results

CAYENNE CREEK – Winner at Charles Town, April 18; 7 furlongs on the dirt. Final time 1:30.33. Off the pace and off the rail, four-wide at the quarter pole, all out drive to the wire to WIN.

CHAMPAGNE CAMIE – Winner at Santa Anita, April 26; 6 furlongs on the dirt. Final time 1:11.31. Four deep, dueled outside up the backstretch, cleared around the bend, urging down the stretch to WIN.

DOUBLE TOUGH TIGER – Winner at Camarero Race Track, April 26; 1 1⁄16 miles on a sloppy track. Final time 1:46.66. Inside seven-wide, led in the stretch to the wire to WIN.

HARTFUL HOPE – Winner at Thistledown, April 28; 6 furlongs on the dirt. Final time 1:11.20. Stalked an early pace, drifted to the seven path at the stretch, inside the leader to the five path, under urging to move ahead to WIN.

TIZ SWEET EMOTION – Winner at Belterra Park, May 3; 1 mile on a sloppy track. Final time 1:38.51. Chased leader to the far turn, rallied from the quarter pole to clear for the WIN.

REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR MEMBERSHIP FORMS TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE *MID-ATLANTIC THOROUGHBRED*

North Carolina Thoroughbred Association

(336) 622-3089
ncthoroughbred.com
ncthoroughbred@gmail.com
436 Sam Lowe Road
Siler City, NC 27344

***Bonnie Herring,** president; **Linda Epley,** Vice President/Secretary/Treasurer*
*Directors: **Arlee Arkofa, Caroline Cooper, Vince Mathews, Chris Stiller***

North Carolina Thoroughbred Association

2025 MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME_____SPOUSE_____

FARM_____

MAILING ADDRESS_____

CITY_____STATE_____ZIP_____

E-MAIL_____

PHONE: HOME_____CELL_____WORK_____

☐Jr. MEMBER - AGE 21 UNDER @ -0 ☐FARM @ $80.00 ☐SPONSOR @ $140.00 ☐CORPORATE SPONSOR @ $250.00

☐INDIVIDUAL @ $55.00

☐NON-PROFIT HORSE ASSOCIATIONS @ $20.00(covers cost of magazines)

Membership includes subscriptions to Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Magazine

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Involvement in the Thoroughbred Industry
(Please check any or all pertaining to you)

☐Breeder☐Racing☐ Steeplechase ☐Boarding☐Foaling
☐Lay-ups☐Race Training☐Racing Fan ☐Showing ☐Show Training
☐Hunter/Jumper ☐Eventing☐Dressage☐Pleasure ☐Other_____

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: **N.C.T.A.**
MAIL WITH COMPLETED APPLICATION TO: **Bonnie Herring, 436 Sam Lowe Road, Siler City, NC 27344**

YOUR NAME OR FARM NAME_____

HORSES IN TRAINING - 2025

Please list the horses you have BRED or OWN that are in training or racing. The Association will put them into our stable on Daily Racing Form. We will keep up with them through this medium and have news for the association and for the Mid-Atlantic. We will only use horses that finish in the money.

This will let us know what our members are doing on the racing front and inform everyone about your successes.

I will still have to trust you to keep us informed regarding the breeding. I love receiving news on how the horses are doing, who you are breeding to, and how you did at the sales. It is hard to find the time to sit down and send me this information, BUT PLEASE TRY.

Please take the time to fill this out for your racing stock. Please list all horses, even the ones I already have, so I can keep our stable updated. Use another page if you need more room.

Bred/Own/Both

HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐

HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐

HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐

HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐

HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐

Mail to: Bonnie Herring
NCTA
436 Sam Lowe Road
Siler City, NC 27344

Or send via E-mail at:
ncthoroughbred@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

PA Thoroughbred NEWSLETTER

June 2025
pabred.com

PA-BRED REMINDERS

- **Early registration:** Within 365 days of foaling
- **Yearling registration:** Dec. 31 of yearling year
- **Stallion registration:** Feb. 15 of year breeding
- **Broodmare domicile:** Dec. 1 or 14 days after a public sale or entering state if being bred back to PA-sire

VISIT PABRED.COM

- **Racing and breeding news**
- **PA-Bred entries/results**
- **Rules, regulations, forms**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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execsec@pabred.com

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701 E. Baltimore Pike, Ste. E
Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: 610-444-1050
www.pabred.com

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2024 PA-BRED CHAMPIONS

Chelsea Durand / Coglianese Photography

Horse of the Year
Older Female
Female Turf
NEECIE MARIE
Bred by Jon A. Marshall

The richest PA-Bred runner of 2024, Neecie Marie earned just shy of $900,000 in six starts – an average per start of nearly $150,000. She was relentless when rallying to win the Grade 3 Beaugay Stakes in her first start of the year in May in New York. She went over the million-dollar mark with a dramatic rally to take Kentucky Downs' Grade 3 Light & Wonder Ladies Marathon Stakes in September. Her season included a second in the Grade 1 New York Stakes at Saratoga and a third in the Grade 2 Beverly D. Stakes at Colonial Downs.

2024 Champions continued from page 1

2yo Filly
CAPRICE
Bred by Gregory & Caroline Bentley

Six wins and a second in seven starts, Caprice won her debut by nearly 14 lengths and followed with five stakes wins – three at Laurel, including the Smart Halo and Gin Talking against open company, and two at Delaware Park. Earning more than $330,000, she ranked as the top-earning PA-Bred 2-year-old of 2024 and was tied for first in the nation by number of wins for a juvenile.

2yo Male
Leading Breeding Fund Recipient (Horse)
THE BOY'S WARRIOR
Bred by Warrior's Reward LLC

A son of retired PA sire Warrior's Reward, The Boy's Warrior dazzled in his debut at Presque Isle in August, won the Whistle Pig Stakes at Parx next out by 9 lengths, and returned to Presque Isle to win the Mark McDermott Stakes by 4 lengths. His only loss came when second in the Pennsylvania Nursery in his first attempt beyond 6 furlongs.

3yo Filly
CARMELINA
Bred by Lilith E. Boucher

The well-traveled filly made nine starts at seven different tracks and was the richest state-bred 3-year-old filly in 2024, earning $136,260. She won the Penny Chenery Stakes at Colonial Downs and was second in the Busher Stakes at Aqueduct and Malvern Rose at Presque Isle Downs.

3yo Male
UNCLE HEAVY
Bred by Barbara Reid

Winner of the Grade 3 Withers Stakes at Aqueduct in his 3-year-old debut, the son of former PA sire Social Inclusion tackled graded company the majority of the year. He finished fourth in the Grade 1 Pennsylvania Derby after a third-place finish in the Smarty Jones Stakes at Parx.

Older Male
Turf Male
I'M VERY BUSY
Bred by Glenn E. Brok LLC & Mark Toothaker

Racing solely in graded company, the son of Cloud Computing came out

continued on page 4

A few words from the Executive Secretary

Congratulations to all of our 2024 champions! A special note goes out to Horse of the Year Neecie Marie, bred by Jon Marshall, Leading Breeder Warrior's Reward, and Leading Stallion Uptowncharlybrown. Russell Jones received the Lifetime Achievement Award and Donna Barton Brothers delivered a great speech. Everyone had a fantastic time.

It's getting late to breed your mares, so go to pabred.com and check out our Pa Stallion & Domicile Directory. Remember, boarding and foaling your mare is available at Daydream Farm. Contact info is located in the directory.

I'm happy to announce that there will be no registration fee for the PA-Sired PA-Bred Stallion Series in 2025. If your 2yo is PA-Sired PA-Bred you will be automatically registered to run. The only exception will be the third and final leg of the 2024 Stallion Series which will be run on Sept. 19 on PA Day at the Races, with stakes purses of $100,000 for 3yos and 3yo fillies. These horses were already registered as 2yos in 2024. Any 3yos you wish to enter in these races that were not nominated in 2024 will have to be nominated by paying the $5,000 stated late fee to the PHBA before the nomination date of Tuesday, Sept. 2. A $50,000 breeder bonus for horses that finish first, second and third in total points for the 2024 series will be paid after those races – $25,000 for first, $15,000 for second and $10,000 for third.

We'll be having our first PA Yearling Show on June 21 at Brandywine Polo Club in Chester County. Four categories, plus one for Grand Champion, will be offered with lots of prizes. You should have received show information and a registration form in the mail. It's also online on our website and located in this issue or the report. Only $50 to enter. We will be paying two $20,000 bonuses, split between the top four 2yo and 3yo show participants, based on total earnings and not limited to PA races.

If you are still using paper registrations, please make sure you forward a signed copy of the Code of Ethics, which is attached to the registration form. We will be transitioning to paperless this year.

Wishing you a fantastic 2025, and remember, PA is the only place to Breed and Race! Go PA!!

Congratulations!

SMARTY JONES

PATRICIA CHAPMAN, JOHN SERVIS AND ALL CONNECTIONS ON HIS INDUCTION INTO

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF RACING'S HALL OF FAME

2004 KENTUCKY DERBY AND PREAKNESS WINNER

WITH LIFETIME EARNINGS OF $7,613,155.00

PENNSYLVANIA HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

FROM KY DERBY WINNER TO RACING'S HALL OF FAME, PENNSYLVANIA BREDS PERFORM!

BARBARA D. LIVINGSTON PHOTO

#PABred on social media

hot when finishing a fast closing second after a troubled trip in the Grade 1 Pegasus World Cup Turf Invitational Stakes at Gulfstream Park in January. He broke through for his first stakes win when taking the Muniz Memorial Classic-G2 at Fair Grounds in March. While off the board in the Manhattan at Saratoga in June, his final start of the year, he was beaten a total of 4 lengths in the hotly contested Grade 1. With $377,000 in earnings, he ranked as the richest PA-Bred male runner of 2024.

Female Sprinter
ROSES FOR DEBRA
Bred by Blackstone Farm LLC

In her first four starts of the year, all sprint stakes, Roses for Debra recorded two wins – the Grade 3 Giant's Causeway at Keeneland and Grade 2 Presque Isle Downs Masters Stakes, the latter in track record time – and ran twice at Saratoga, missing by a head when second in the Grade 2 Intercontinental, and finishing third in the Smart N Fancy.

Male Sprinter
OUR SHOT
Bred by Dr. S. Mark Rayburg Inc.

Racing at distances from 5 to 6 furlongs, he concluded his season with his first stakes victory in Keeneland's Woodford Stakes-G2 at 5½ furlongs in October. Other outings included missing by a head when second in Saratoga's Harvey Pack Stakes and finishing just a little over a length behind the winners in the Shakertown-G2 at Keeneland and Big Daddy Stakes at Turfway Park in his first two starts of the year.

PA-Preferred Female
DONTLOOKBACKATALL
Bred by A1A Racing

A three-stakes win streak, from 5 to 6 furlongs on the turf, got started in the License Fee at the Belmont at the Big A meet in May, followed by Parx's Power by Far in June and culminating in the Grade 3 Caress Stakes at Saratoga in July. The daughter of former PA sire Peace and Justice also finished second in the $1.5 million Exacta Systems Ladies Turf Sprint Stakes-G2 at Kentucky Downs.

PA-Preferred Male
SMOOTH B
Bred by St. Omer's Farm & WynOaks Farm LLC

Back-to-back victories at Parx in the Marshall Jenney Handicap and Turf Monster Stakes propelled Smooth B past the million-dollar mark in career earnings. The son of PA sire Weigelia also finished third in the Jim McKay Turf Sprint Stakes on Preakness Day at Pimlico.

Broodmare of the Year
ESSENTIAL ROSE
Dam of Roses for Debra & Rosie's Alibi
Owned by Blackstone Farm LLC

From six PA-Bred foals of racing age, Essential Rose is the dam of four winners, two being 2024 stakes performers: Roses for Debra, winner of the Grade 2 Presque Isle Downs Masters (while setting a new track record) and Grade 3 Giant's Causeway Stakes; and Rosie's Alibi, winner of the Princess of Sylmar Stakes. Combined, the two have 26 lifetime starts, 13 wins, won or placed in 10 stakes, and earned over $1 million.

Lifetime Achievement
RUSSELL B. JONES

Award of Merit
WORK TO RIDE

Thoroughbred Makeover Top PA-Bred
HE DID IT
Bred by Jonathan Sheppard

Total Leading Breeding Fund Recipient
WARRIOR'S REWARD LLC
$927,518.75

Leading Overall Breeder of PA-Breds
WARRIOR'S REWARD LLC
$2,241,660

Leading Breeder Award Recipient
WARRIOR'S REWARD
$727,854.70

Leading Stallion
UPTOWNCHARLYBROWN
$225,115.50

SCTOBA

South Carolina

Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER JUNE 2025

Racing Across the Nation

Between March 22 and April 19, four horses who have trained in South Carolina proved best in stakes races in Arizona, California, New York and South Carolina.

On March 22 at Turf Paradise, Brian Kahn's Mucho Macho Girl was much the best in the Queen of the Green Handicap. The 5-year-old mare sat behind the leaders approaching the quarter pole. She then moved out a few paths, took the lead with an eighth of a mile to go, and quickly left the field behind, crossing the finish line 4¼ lengths in front for her first stakes win. She is a graduate of the Travis Durr Training Center.

Tirupati, also became a stakes winner for the first time when she captured the Grade 3 Wilshire at Santa Anita March 29. Tirupati, owned by Augustine Stables, was quick out of the gate to take the lead and led wire-to-wire, winning by a length. The 4-year-old filly underwent Marcus and Crystal Ryan's breaking program in Aiken before being sold at the 2023 Fasig-Tipton Two-Year-Olds in Training Sale at Timonium for $230,000 under their Mason Springs banner.

The SCTOBA-member trainer-rider team of Kate and Bernie Dalton won the Carolina Cup Hurdle Stakes at the Springdale Racecourse in Camden for the second year in a row, also on March 29. After winning the 2024 edition with Abaan, Kate gave Bernie a leg up on the St Rita Racing-owned China Beach this year. A former flat runner, China Beach was making his 29th career start. He settled behind the frontrunner until taking the lead while clearing the last hurdle and quickly sprinting clear to win by 5½ lengths.

Three-year-old Mo Plex, owned by R and H Stable, recorded his fourth victory, three in stakes, in only seven career starts, when taking the Bay Shore Stakes at Aqueduct n April 19. As a 2-year-old, Mo Plex won his first three starts, including the Sanford Stakes-G3 and Funny Cide Stakes, both at Saratoga. In the Bay Shore, Mo Plex dueled for the lead throughout the running of the race and would not be denied, winning by a head. He was developed for his racing career by Travis Durr and his crew in St. Matthews.

Taylor Kingsley – A Maiden No More

Taylor Kingsley, daughter of SCTOBA members Arch and Wendy Kingsley, made her professional riding debut as a jockey on April 14 and rode Princetown to the winner's circle!

Taylor has been riding for Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott at the Payson Training Center this winter. Kingsley hustled Princetown out of the gate going right to the front and led gate-to-wire, crossing the finish line 2½ lengths in front in this Allowance test.

Taylor's proud parents were there at Gulfstream for this very special occasion. Arch Kingsley was one of the leading steeplechase jockeys of his era and now is a well-known and very successful steeplechase trainer.

Taylor has ridden in 11 countries, winning eight races while participating in the Ferganti Federation amateur race riding program over the past few years.

Following the race, Taylor said, "I'm lost for words. I'm grateful to Bill Mott. This is huge. It's been a huge opportunity. I actually can't believe it."

SCTOBA Members finish first and second in Carolina Cup

For the second year in a row, the team of SCTOBA members Kate and Bernie Dalton won the $75,000 Carolina Cup at the Springdale Racecourse in Camden on March 29. Having won last year with Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners' Abaan, Kate gave her husband, Bernie, a leg up on China Beach, making his first stakes start. China Beach, owned by St Rita Racing, took the lead over from Little Trilby after the last fence and went on to a 5½-length victory. Little Trilby is campaigned by Del Rio Racing, managed by SCTOBA member Virginia Lazenby.

The SCTOBA member team of Arch Kingsley and Mark Buyck Jr. won a maiden hurdle event with Memento (Fr) by 8 lengths. Buyck was the owner of Show Court, winner of the Carolina Cup in 2017. Kingsley also was the trainer of Show Court. Memento was ridden to victory by Gerard Galligan.

The first race of the day, a maiden claiming hurdle, was captured by Happenstance Stable's Awesome Strike in his first start over jumps. Dan Nevin rode for trainer Mark Beecher. Awesome Strike made the lead in the stretch and crossed the finish line 6 lengths in front.

Upland Flats Racing LLC's Moonshine Time (Ire) proved best in the third race, another maiden hurdle race. He went wire-to-wire under jockey Stephen Mulqueen after being saddled by Keri Brion. Moonshine Time won by 5¾ lengths.

Noble Anthem (Ire), making his first start in the U.S. after campaigning in Europe, came from off the pace to win a ratings handicap. Head and head with another at the last fence, Ballybristol Farms LLC's Noble Anthem, trained by Thomas Garner and ridden by Evan Dwan, took control and charged to a 2½-length victory.

The final race of the day, on the flat at 1½ miles, was won by a nose in an exciting finish by Kevin Conto's Pickford. He is trained by Lillith Boucher and was ridden by her husband, Richard.

Puca – Champion Broodmare

Puca, a graded stakes-placed stakes winner on the racetrack, was named 2024 Kentucky Broodmare of the Year by the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association. A 2012 foal, Puca is by Big Brown out of Boat's Ghost, by Silver Ghost. Campaigned by Jerry Crawford's Donegal Racing, Puca was prepared for her racing career at Franklin "Goree" Smith's Elloree Training Center in Elloree.

As a broodmare, Puca is the dam of 2023 Kentucky Derby-G1 winner Mage and 2024 Belmont Stakes-G1 and Haskell Stakes-G1 winner Dornach. Her 3-year-old son, Baeza, finished second in this year's Santa Anita Derby-G1.

South Carolina-trained winners

Horse	*Training Center*	*Date*	*Track*	*Type of Race*
In the Chase	Travis Durr Training Ctr	03/20/25	Charles Town	Allowance
Bee Well	Arch Kingsley	03/22/25	Aiken	Maiden Special Weight
MUCHO MACHO GIRL	Travis Durr Training Ctr	03/22/25	Turf Paradise	Queen of the Green H
Rominski	Mason Springs	03/23/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Mischief Maxey	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	03/24/25	Parx Racing	Maiden Special Weight
Thegoddessofsnakes	Travis Durr Training Ctr	03/25/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
Rock Me Gently	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	03/25/25	Parx Racing	Starter Allowance
Big Boys	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	03/26/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
The Boy's Warrior	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	03/28/25	Penn National	Allowance
Memento	Arch Kingsley	03/29/25	Camden	Maiden Special Weight
CHINA BEACH	Kate Dalton	03/29/25	Camden	Carolina Cup
TIRUPATI	Mason Springs	03/29/25	Santa Anita	Wilshire S-G3
Latta	Travis Durr Training Ctr	03/29/25	Aqueduct	Allowance
Fedupwiththefed	Custom Care - D. Freyer	03/30/25	Aqueduct	Maiden Special Weight
Straight to Water	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	03/31/25	Laurel Park	Maiden Special Weight
Apollonia Vitelli	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	04/02/25	Parx Racing	Starter Allowance
Spinning Pride	Aiken - Cary Frommer	04/03/25	Hawthorne	Allowance
Martini Martin	Mason Springs	04/05/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Bunny Hop	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	04/05/25	Tampa Bay Downs	Allowance
Doctor Abbie	Rentz Farm Training Ctr	04/07/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
Chiseler	Travis Durr Training Ctr	04/09/25	Keeneland	Allowance
No Cents	Travis Durr Training Ctr	04/11/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Insubordination	Travis Durr Training Ctr	04/12/25	Gulfstream Park	Maiden Special Weight
Mywifeknowsitall	Travis Durr Training Ctr	04/17/25	Gulfstream Park	Allowance
MO PLEX	Travis Durr Training Ctr	04/19/25	Aqueduct	Bay Shore S

VIRGINIA

COLONIAL'S SUMMER SEASON FEATURES STAKES RACING EVERY SATURDAY

American Promise won the first Virginia Derby on dirt March 15 (Coady Media)

Colonial Downs is preparing to hold its longest summer meet in years when a 9-week, 41-day thoroughbred campaign begins in New Kent July 9. The season continues through September 13 with racing every Wednesday thru Saturday along with a special Monday card on Labor Day. First post is 12:30 PM except on Fridays when a 4:00 PM twilight program begins.

The traditional summer stand follows an inaugural 3-day spring meet which was held in mid-March and featured the first ever dirt version of the Virginia Derby, which served as an official Kentucky Derby prep race. The event marked the first ever advance sale sellout crowd in Colonial's history.

"The March meet was something new for Colonial Downs and we hope to take some of the positivity from that meet and carry it into the summer," said Frank Hopf, Colonial's Senior Director of Racing. "Virginia Derby Day went really well. We had a great marketing campaign and got a lot of new people exposed to racing here and are excited about how that is going to carry over into the summer meet. We're ramping up now."

Overnight races will offer $70,000 for open maiden special weight contests ($87,500 for Virginia-restricted races) while allowance races will feature purses of up to $80,000 for open runners and $90,000 for their Virginia-restricted counterparts.

The summer stakes program is highlighted by four graded stakes and includes 31 races worth a total of $5.85 million. A minimum of two stakes will be contested every Saturday throughout the campaign.

In addition to the August 9 "Festival of Racing" and September 6 Old Dominion Derby programs, three different Saturdays feature a pair of Virginia-restricted stakes (8/2, 8/30, 9/13) and three feature a pair of Virginia/Maryland-bred/sired stakes (7/12, 8/16, 8/23). The July 26 card includes a pair of open stakes while the second weekend of action features two Virgnia-bred/sired stakes on Friday July 18 & Saturday July 19.

Going more in depth, a pair of 2-year-old races for Virginia-restricted runners — the $100,000 Hickory Tree and its sister race, the $100,000 Keswick — headline the Saturday August 2 program. The 5 1/2-furlong dirt stakes both offer $50,000 in an additional monies for Virginia-bred/sired horses. Later in the meet, older Virgina-restricted horses are featured in the $100,000 Meadow Stable Handicap and its female counterpart, the $100,000 Camptown Handicap, both also at 5 ½ furlongs. Like the Keswick and Hickory Tree, each race offers $50,000 in additional monies for Virginia-bred/sired horses.

The final restricted races usher out meet on September 13 and are long time staples of the stakes program. The Bert Allen and Nellie Mae Cox Handicaps are 1-1/16th miles turf events with the latter restricted to fillies and mares. Additional $50,000 monies are available for this pair as well.

"The additional four Virginia Restricted Handicaps at the end of the Colonial meet open up more opportunities for Virginia breds as well as including the Virginia certified runners," said VTA Executive Director Jill Byrne. "The Virginia Certified incentive program continues to be lucrative for horsemen to participate in throughout the country."

With continued collaboration between Virginia and Maryland stakeholders, six stakes races restricted to Maryland and Virginia-bred or sired horses will be contested beginning with a pair the first Saturday of the meet — the $125,000 Star De Naskra for 3-year-olds and $125,000 Miss Disco for sophomore fillies, each at seven furlongs on the dirt. Two more are slated for Saturday, August 16 – the $125,000 Find for older horses at 1-1/16 miles on turf and its distaff counterpart, the $125,000 All Brandy also at 1-1/16 miles on turf. The remaining two are 5½-furlong turf races for 2-year-olds: the $125,000 Jamestown its sister race, the $125,000 Dolley Madison scheduled for Saturday, August 23.

Colonial's first ever advance sale sellout crowd enjoyed Derby Day festivities March 15 (Backlight Photography)

Dan Bork is Colonial's new Racing Secretary (VEA photo)

Colonial's Senior Director of Racing Frank Hopf is optimistic about the 2025 summer meet (VEA photo)

"The cooperation we have now with Maryland served as a great opportunity to add to the stakes program," said Hopf. "These additions create a path that continues to keep Colonial Downs on the map. As we build a stakes program, we will also be able to strengthen the overnite races and stakes under cards at the same time. Setting up those races and getting a chance to have more horses participate is exciting."

The VTA's Byrne echoed that sentiment. "The collaboration between Maryland and Virginia to open these state-bred and/or sired stakes to both programs, benefits the horsemen immensely by providing many more opportunities and extending the seasons for both. "With Colonial Downs hosting six of those stakes races during July and August, it adds to an already robust schedule."

Virginia-bred/sired runners — by themselves — will take the second weekend spotlight with four $125,000 events over two consecutive days. The Punch Line, a 5½ furlong turf dash and the Edward P. Evans, a two-turn 1-1/16 miles grass route, will be contested on Friday, July 18 while the distaff version of the same races, the Glenn Petty and Brookmeade Stakes respectively, will be raced the following day.

"The overall program set up by the Virginia Equine Alliance (VEA) is terrific," noted Hopf. "One of the biggest pushes we need going forward is to make trainers more aware and knowledgeable of the Certified program so they know when they have horses eligible for these races. In the past, I've gotten quite a few calls from trainers that found out they have a restricted horse but didn't know about it soon enough. The momentum is already picking up in this area. Trainers are getting more information in advance on how the program works."

Racing applications for the summer meet have been processed and stalls are already being assigned. Combined with backstretch improvements, more racing opportunities, a similar purse structure as last year and an enhanced racing and track operations team, there is lots of optimism.

"Having racing Secretary Dan Bork here for a full season will be great," said Hopf. "We got a strong, positve response to the racing applications. We're going to welcome in some new outfits that haven't run at Colonial previously which is exciting. At the same time, we'll welcome back stables that have supported us in past years so it should be a nice mix overall."

"We have completed work on a new dormitory that will be up and running," he added. It looks great and will provide accommodations for additional grooms. It's not often these days that tracks build new amenities on the back side so hopefully the new dorm is a positive sign of good things to come. We'll have another year under our belt with Leif Dickinson and his track surfaces team so that is another plus. We're going to be adding more pieces there and to the racing team as well so that will improve the surfaces long term. It's an exciting time at Colonial Downs and I'm happy to be part of it."

One of the most notable changes this summer will be the increase in racing to four days per week, up from three — which had been the norm since Colonial reopened in 2019 after a five-year hiatus.

"We plan to start out carding eight races per day," Hopf said. "Time will tell on that number based on horse flesh and response from horsemen. With Maryland taking a little bit of a hiatus during out meet, it should bring some trainers in here to help support the races. I come from a track we ran four days a week so it certainly can be done. We're going to make every effort to have good competitive racing every day we run."

More details on the Colonial Downs meet can be found at colonialdowns.com and at virginiahorseracing.com. Details on all the Virginia horse incentive programs can be found at vabred.org.

VIRGINIA'S SPRING STEEPLECHASE SEASON CONCLUDES; THURSDAY JUMP RACES ARE SCHEDULED AT COLONIAL THIS SUMMER

Virginia's spring steeplechase program concluded May 2 as National Steeplechase Association (NSA) sanctioned meets took place over three consecutive weekends. Single day meets took place at Middleburg's Glenwood Park, in Charlottesville at the Foxfield Spring Races, and at Great Meadow for Virginia Gold Cup festivities. Seven Point-to-Point (PTP) meets were held as well and three featured NSA sanctioned jump races on their respective hybrid programs: the Blue Ridge PTP, Old Dominion Hounds PTP and Loudoun Hunt PTP.

Summer jump races will take place in Virginia throughout Colonial's meet on many Thursdays beginning at 10:45 AM. On-track wagering will be available for all races. The summer campaign in New Kent is highlighted by a pair of $100,000 steeplechase stakes — the Randolph D. Rouse on August 7 and the Life's Illusion on September 4.

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Visit www.vabred.org–the best source for Virginia breeding and racing news

For more information on the Virginia Breeders Fund or Virginia Stakes Program, please contact the VTA.

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Virginia Breeders Fund

West Virginia
THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
Newsletter June 2025

Stakes and Legislation Action: Making the Right Moves

By Jeff Gilleas

Horse racing and politics make for strange bedfellows, but in today's fast-paced world the two are often forced into uneasy alliances.

On both sides of an issue there are cogent tales of right and wrong with passionate individuals debating their validity. Such was the case of Legislation known to horsemen as the "Haircut Bill." Enacted to help pay down the unfunded liability of Workman's Compensation, using major State industries – such as coal, gas, timber, oil and racing – there was an understanding in place that monies appropriated eventually would be released back to those businesses.

For almost a decade a battle has ensued with racing cast in the role as the offended party waiting for financial parity. Justice for our two-legged and four-legged warriors is forthcoming per a recent phone conversation with Delegate Joe Funkhouser.

A third generation Jefferson County horseman, Funkhouser passionately represents his constituents with an unwavering dedication to family, horse racing, agriculture and Faith. When Governor Patrick Morrisey signed SB-75, it marked a congenial collaboration for Thoroughbred Racing, and the former West Virginia Attorney General, while highlighting trust in the Democratic process of government.

Passage of SB 576 (fixed odds horse race betting), allowed West Virginia to become the third state in the country to approve the modern betting platform. Championed by Senator Jason Barrett, this move is an attempt to bring new fans to the sport while ultimately increasing much needed revenue.

Charles Town HBPA Executive Director Maria Catignani is optimistic the new form of wagering will bolster handle, but realizes there will be a transition period for information and instruction. Fixed odds wagering is where an individual bets on the outcome of an event or horse race and the odds are determined at the time of placing that bet, unlike the current format where odds fluctuate on money played. Popular in Europe and Australia, fixed-odds wagering will gain the needed impetus for success in America, if large scale sports books can sell its simplicity and attractiveness to fans.

ORIGINAL GOLD STAKES

What a difference a few days can make in horse racing. The Original Gold Stakes carded for Saturday, April 12, was canceled due to track conditions after torrential rain the previous day.

Horsemen and management opted to bring the program back, and the racing office hastily scrambled to reassemble the talented cast of West Virginia-bred distaff runners, moving it to Friday night, April 18. Entries were redrawn for the $75,000 race and last year's winner, Lightnin Runner, seemed to be the most affected transitioning from the preferential one hole to lamentable post 10.

The Nicole and Ronney Brown-bred still exhibited her habitual

high turn of speed, but visibly tired late after an extended duel with second choice Maggie's Girl. The old adage that pace makes a race once again proved accurate, as post time favorite Mendys Honey accelerated by the weakening duo to record her initial stakes victory.

The lightly-raced daughter of Mendelssohn, out of the highly productive mare Honey Chile, sat the perfect trip and finished geared down late under the meet's leading rider, Arnaldo Bocachica. Final time for the 7 furlongs was a modest 1:28.83.

Winner of six races from eight starts, Mendys Honey has earned just over $185,000 for owner Ultra Championship Racing and trainer Anthony Farrior. Breeder James Miller and West Virginia Thoroughbred racing should be proud of this rising star's effort, and doubly so for the response his homebred, Pascaline, produced in the Bay Shore Stakes at Aqueduct April 19.

Off since last September, Pascaline didn't break alertly, briefly awaited racing room at the head of the stretch, and closed boldly to finish third in the stakes for 3-year-olds. The future looks bright for this son of Upstart, and hopefully a date with Charles Town and the Robert Hilton Memorial are penciled in on trainer Arnaud Delacour's calendar.

CONFUCIUS SAY STAKES

A highly competitive and familiar group of West Virginia older males met Saturday, April 19, in the $75,000 Confucius Say Stake. Included in the full field going 7 furlongs were millionaire Muad'dib, No Change ($556,000) and Social Chic ($487,000), with the latter two making their initial 2025 debuts.

Announcer Paul Espinosa Jr.'s voice raised a full octave in the run into the clubhouse turn, as the entire field was precariously separated by a claustrophobic spacing. Riders were hastily hunting for position, with Paymengold directing the pressured pace.

Going into the far turn, it was as if the trailing quartet's alarm clocks went off in tandem, with Muad'dib, Jungle Beast, No Change and Social Chic concurrently accelerating. In a tale of two races, the wearisome pacesetters retired for the night, while the high-and-wide closers surged into contention.

At the sixteenth pole, a match race ensued with No Change (Fiber Sonde—Looks Like Trouble) and Social Chic (Upstart—Tres Chic), liberating themselves from the pack. Mere yards from the finish line, the brawl between two very accomplished contestants exposed the pure athleticism of winning jockey Angel Cruz, as the young journeyman appeared a blur of hands, elbows and reins operating in perfect harmony.

Cyndy McKee's nimble creature, No Change, ran well in defeat and is a racehorse of rare ability, sporting a win and two seconds in the Confucius Say Stakes. Forced to circle the entire field turning for home, the Beau Ridge Farm-bred most certainly will make some noise in the senior male division this year.

No visible excuses for Muad'dib, except the long-striding son of Fiber Sonde prefers less traffic and more elbow room to employ his patented kick.

Social Chic is owned by Smart Angle LLP, trained by Jeff Runco and bred by James Miller.

GET WELL SOON

Director of Racing at Charles Town Races, Charles McIntosh would never be accused of lying down on the job, but for the last two months "Charlie Mac" has done just that. Hospitalized for repeated operations to alleviate back pain and leg numbness, the passionate and knowledgeable horseman appears on the verge of finally being on the road to recovery.

With almost five decades in service to the racing industry, Charlie at one time was the youngest racing secretary (Latonia) in the country, held the reins at Birmingham Race Course, and is fully committed to excellence at his current post by upholding the tradition of Erich Zimny's Charles Town Classic. From the old school, Charles McIntosh is definitely missed. No one possesses his work ethic or flair for the game.

We need a Charlie McIntosh Night at the 19th hole upon his return!

West Virginia Thoroughbred Breeders Association

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Chasing
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'I think about Hunt Cup literally every day of the year'

By Betsy Burke Parker

The Maryland Hunt Cup had its 128th running Saturday, April 27 at Worthington Farms in Glyndon, Maryland north of Baltimore. Nine were entered, including five 2024 runners. Blackhall was back to defend his win, along with Goodoldtimes (third), Rocket Star Red (fifth), Mr. Fine Threads (fell) and Withoutmoreado (lost rider.)

The roots of the race run deep. The spring of 1894, a classic foxhunters' argument broke out. A small group of riders were discussing the various merits of their hunters on the steps of Maryland's Elkridge Club.

Essentially, they wanted a grudge match to prove, in a gentlemanly manner, whose horse was fastest.

To quell the debate, a four-mile race over natural fencelines was created. Nine ran, John McHenry winning the Tuesday, May 22 race on his Johnny Miller.

The event was considered a roaring success, a unifying force in the hunt world that was also an instant placeholder on the hunt valley social and sporting calendars.

End of the hunt season, beginning of the party season.

Hunt Cup was perfect.

Then, as now, the race exudes tradition. There no commercial sponsors, no pari-mutuel. All the riders are amateur.

Worthington Farms owner J.W.Y. "Duck" Martin, race winner in 1972 and part of a family line with almost 100 Hunt Cup starts, told the Baltimore Sun that it's "the Kentucky Derby of steeplechase. It might be the best race in the country."

Duck Martin on Early Earner at the 13th Fence of the Hunt Cup.
Photo courtesy of Nancy Roberts

The four-mile race, over 22 testing post-and-rail and line fences up to 5 feet tall, the singular race that in a winning horse favors a peculiar mix of speed, stamina and jumping ability. Eight horses have won the race three times, but no horse has won it four times.

"It's so unique," said Martin. "My father bought the place in the 1930s, he won the race in 1936 (aboard Inshore), I was born in 1939, I won the race (aboard Early Earner in 1972). The course is part of the family. For so many people, it's part of their life."

To say Duck Martin knows the Maryland Hunt Cup is understatement.

Martin, 85, has owned and managed his family's Worthington Farms course in Glyndon, Maryland, since 1969. He knows every inch of the ancient turf even better than that, though, "having mowed the grass there for nearly 80 years," Martin says.

Martin knows the landscape, and the wider neighborhood, as longtime joint-master of the local Green Spring Valley Hounds.

He knows the race, and racecourse, on a far more intimate level – four times he saw the race's 4 miles/22 fences from between the ears of a starter in the world-renowned timber classic.

His most memorable Hunt Cup moment came in 1972 when he won with his own Early Earner and got to enjoy the view from inside the winner's circle.

"For so many people, it's part of their life," Martin reflected in a 2020 interview in This Is Horse Racing.

Reflecting on his lifetime of Hunt Cup memories, Martin says his '72 winner was a lovely partner, calling Early Earner "a great horse to train, just beautiful to ride."

The owner-rider's trajectory to win the Hunt Cup was classic Maryland timber: The pair dominated the Maryland spring scene for years: In 1969, Martin and Early Earner won at My Lady's Manor on April 12, finished third in the Grand National on April 19 and second in their first try at the Maryland Hunt Cup on April 26.

He missed the 1970 season, then Martin broke his collarbone in the 1971 Grand National, so neighbor and friend Bruce Fenwick got the call at Hunt Cup. They fell at the third.

Martin and Early Earner won in '72, beating a star-studded field that included

1969 and 1971 winner Landing Party. They fell at the 14th in 1973 and pulled up in 1974.

Martin says the allure of the race is tricky to articulate. "Maybe it's because not many riders ever get to it. Anybody that wins the Maryland Hunt Cup has really achieved something special.

"We're hoping for a great day this Saturday."

We wanted to hear from the riders – past and present – what's behind this ancient drive to jump higher and run faster, to tame the world's most challenging steeplechase course. Open only to amateurs, it begs a perplexing question – if not for money, then why? Why tackle a quest that, to the onlooker, appears implausible.

Is it honor? Is it glory? Is it "because it's there" like summiting Everest?

2025 Jockey Will Biddick:

Somerset-based Will Biddick (Mr. Fine Threads), Britain's most successful amateur with 613 wins from 2100 rides and eight national men's championships, told an English online racing magazine that his first try at the Hunt Cup was "a novelty, a chance to meet new people and try something different.

"I've just updated my insurance.

"It's a very historic race. It's no good over-thinking it – it's just another race and I'll be taking it as it comes."

2025 Jockey Jordan Canavan:

Jordan Canavan (Monbeg Stream), 28, grew up in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. His father was a jump rider and trainer, his grandfather a flat jockey. Canavan was a top-rated pony jock and junior rider before he kicked off his own racing career.

Canavan says he'd always heard about America's best-known steeplechase – the Maryland Hunt Cup.

He arrived to trainer Leslie Young's Ashwell Stables near Unionville, Pennsylvania in February with the Hunt Cup as the target. "The (solid timber) fences here make it more of a horseman's race. At home you can go down and attack a fence, even a big stiff hedge, and you still skim through the top.

"You don't do that over timber." Canavan's won two over timber this season – the apprentice timber at Cheshire in March and the featured Grand National timber stake, both with Mike Smith's Wrestlingwithrae.

He says he'll walk the Hunt Cup course with former jockey James Slater. Slater rode the Hunt Cup four times; he was second with Coal Dust in 2008.

Brett Owings and Rocket Star Red on the right, at the 2022 Grand National Steeplechase Races. *©Douglas Lees*

2025 Jockey Brett Owings:

Brett Owings (Rocket Star Red) grew up at Worthingon Farms, and Saturday rides his home course for the sixth time, every year since 2018 (not in 2020 when the race was lost to the pandemic.) Fifth in last year's Hunt Cup, the Maryland native was second in 2022, third in 2021, fifth in 2019. He came off at the 14th in 2018, his first Hunt Cup start.

Owings, 30, hunts with Green Spring Valley, and credits hunting with a lot of the skills the typical Hunt Cup horse – and rider – need to develop.

"You're facing the course just as much as you're facing the other horses."

He says it's a really difficult race to win, testing and unpredictable. Hunt Cup, along with the other legs of the Timber Triple (My Lady's Manor and Grand National), are always the goal for Owings.

"Having the trainers 'import' some really talented riders from England and Ireland since we don't have as many jockeys on the circuit (these days), makes me try harder, makes us (American amateurs) ride better, raise our game.

"I think about the Hunt Cup, literally, every day of the year. Honestly, race day is the only day I'm not worried if I'm going to get there.

"Once you're headed down to the start, you can relax, because you're there, after all that planning and work.

"It's all worth it then."

2025 Jockey Dan Nevin:

"My first ride in America was the Maryland Hunt Cup," says Dan Nevin (Goodoldtimes). "I landed in on Thursday and won the hunt cup on the Saturday. Knowing nothing about the race when I won it in 2021 I don't think I appreciated it as much as I should have. I've met so many people since then with great stories of the race.

"I definitely appreciate it a lot more after learning so much about the race.

"And the fact that it is restricted to amateurs further highlights that this race is about passion and the ability to cross a difficult country on a good horse with a total disregard for any money you could earn as a professional.

"My reason for staying amateur for the Maryland Hunt Cup is for the excitement and adrenaline rush you get when you're galloping down to them big fences. They're big and stiff, and it's a challenge I enjoy.

"Winning it once wants to make you win it even more the second time.

"You need a horse that has plenty of scope to jump a big fence, (one that) can jump at the end of four miles the same way he jumped the first. If you were on Vintage Vinnie like I was you had no choice but to go fast!"

2025 Jockey Conor Tierney:

"One phrase I like using when someone asks me about the Hunt Cup is (that) the buzz you get galloping down to the third fence is something you can't explain to anyone," says Conor Tierney (Road to Oz).

"That's why I think we all choose to ride in this race."

Joe Davies: 3 Hunt Cup jockey wins. Saddles 3 in the 2025 Hunt Cup:

"The Maryland Hunt Cup is the only high-level sporting event in the world that hasn't (sold-out) to commercial sponsors.

"This is still the bravest riders and the most talented jumping horses (over) the same course that hasn't changed in over 100 years. It's remained the single most iconic race in the U.S. and is known around the steeplechase world for the challenge it provides.

"When you travel to England, Ireland and France in steeplechasing circles, the first, and likely only, question an American rider is ever asked is 'have you ridden in the Maryland Hunt Cup.'"

Patrick Worrall: Rode 7 Hunt Cups; won with Von Csadek in 1992:

"I never anticipated riding races to make a living: To me it was always sport.

"Steeplechasing in the United States is built on participation – committees, volunteers, landowners, horse owners, etc., most, if not all, have roots in riding races, (or their) parents, siblings, cousins.

"It is a very expensive sport. Lose the opportunity for well-endowed amateurs to get involved as participants, lose the sport."

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Index to Advertisers

Colonial Downs 13
Country Life Farm & Merryland ..... Inside front cover
EMO Insurance 25
Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 1
John Deere 17
Maryland-Bred Race Fund 4
Maryland-Bred Yearling Show 11
Maryland Horse Library and Education Center 70
Maryland Jockey Club 5
Northview Stallion Station ..... Inside back cover
NTRA Advantage 59
Retired Racehorse Project 24
Rockridge Stud 15
The Mill 9
Vetericyn 25
Virginia Thoroughbred Association ..... Back cover
WVTBA 3

— Looking Back —

The heart and soul of the Thoroughbred in the region
Mid-Atlantic
Hallowed Ground
Raven's Choice (right) wins historic Hunt Cup by DQ
Moreno upsets Charles Town Classic • Ninety North Racing's retirement plan • Foal 'squeezing'

10 years ago

■ Maryland trainer King T. Leatherbury joined two others with strong regional connections – jockey Chris Antley, who grew up and learned to ride at the Elloree Training Center in South Carolina, and Maryland-based sprinting dynamo Xtra Heat, purchased by trainer John Salzman Sr. for Ken Taylor and Harry Deitchman for $5,000 out of the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale – in the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame class of 2015.

In typical Leatherbury fashion, the 82-year-old quipped: "I got the call, and I demanded a recount."

■ In a strange Maryland Hunt Cup, Ann Jackson's Raven's Choice, bred by her late husband Cary, was awarded victory after apparent winner Imperial Way, who crossed the finish a half-length in front, failed to carry the appropriate weight the entire trip, a lead pad having fallen out after clearing the 19th fence. It was the same fence where Cary Jackson fell while riding in the race in 1951, and where his ashes were spread in 2011.

Mark Beecher picked up his second Hunt Cup win in three years. Bethany Baumgardner, one of four female riders to compete in 2015, missed winning in the previous year's race by a nose aboard Imperial Way. Now a trainer who started two horses on Preakness weekend in 2025, she recorded her first victory two weeks earlier in the John D. Schapiro Memorial at My Lady's Manor.

■ Grade 1 winner Moreno, trained by Eric Guillot, won the $1.5 million Charles Town Classic-G2, while overwhelming favorite Shared Belief, the world's best racehorse according to the Longines international rankings system, was pulled up on the backside by Mike Smith after suffering a hip fracture. Without Shared Belief, show prices were lucrative – $23.20 on Moreno, who paid $16 to win; $71.20 on Imperative and $45.60 on Page McKenney.

Shared Belief, champion 2-year-old male of 2013 trained by Jerry Hollendorfer, returned to training months later, but died from colic after a workout in December.

■ Mark Reid, one of the region's leading trainers when he retired in 2000, saddled his first winner in 15 years, sending out claimer Dreaming of Andy A in March at Penn National. Reid had been a bloodstock agent the years in between, buying the likes of Medaglia d'Oro, You and Midas Eyes, and managing the career of 2005 Horse of the Year Saint Liam, and purchasing (with partners) Walnut Green Farm in West Grove, Pa.

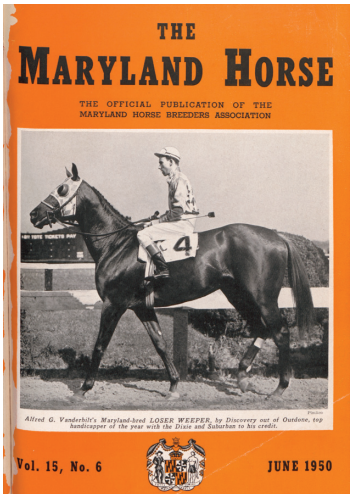
On his return, Reid said: "It was great watching the first foals be born at the farm, but a lot of it is watching grass grow." He admitted to not having any undue expectations: "I'm just going to have fun with a few horses at Fair Hill Training Center. I've been wacky about this sport since I was a young man, and I'm happy to report the feeling never gets old."

Reid trained another seven years, won 138 more races, and sent out the earners of more than $1 million in 2019. Lifetime he won 1,821 races with purse earnings of nearly $21 million.

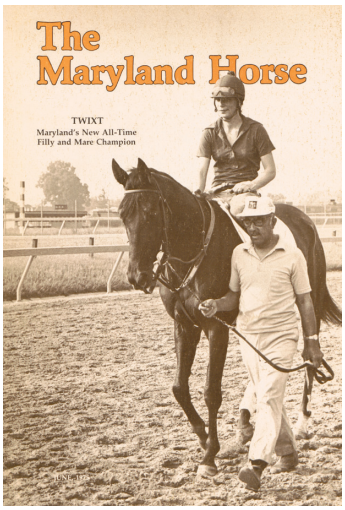
75 years ago

■ One of the biggest Thoroughbred deals of the time marked Abram S. Hewitt's sale of his entire holdings. "A colorful character," the White Post, Va., resident planned to devote his time to his duties as a legal adviser to government agencies. It would be the first time Hewitt would be without horses in more than 20 years. He was well known as the importer of *Ksar and Belfonds, breeder and part-owner of Phalanx, owner of the likes of Jacola and Some Chance, and former owner of Pilate.

■ Alfred Vanderbilt's Sagamore Stable was on its way to its most successful season, with Loser Weeper ranking among the nation's best handicap horses with four stakes wins, including the Dixie at Pimlico and Suburban at Belmont; and Next Move among the best 3-year-old fillies after her win in the Coaching Club American Oaks. The previous year's champion 2-year-old filly, Bed o' Roses, had yet to start.



■ Paul Ebelhardt, of Kentucky's Calumet Farm, judged the 1950 crop of Maryland-bred yearlings, picking Henry S. Horkheimer's chestnut son of The Rhymer bred, by Country Life Farm, as champion of the MHBA's annual yearling show. Presented for the first time was the Henry L. Straus Challenge Trophy, a memorial to the MHBA's late president. Given to the show champion, the trophy would be held for one year and returned for competition, with a replica becoming the permanent property of the winner.



50 years ago

■ The 100th Preakness drew a record crowd of 75,216, which raised the question as to whether a "one-day circus" benefited or hurt Maryland's racing industry. Editor Snowden Carter wrote: "My own conclusion is that it helps."

Master Derby, fourth in the Derby, upset Derby-winning favorite Foolish Pleasure, who rallied for second.

■ Maryland's first 2-year-old sale exceeded all expectations, with 46 head selling for an average of $9,785. The sale was strengthened by a five-horse consignment from Bruce S. Campbell's Early Bird Stud near Ocala, Fla., consignor of the sales-topping $30,000 filly. Said Campbell: "All this sale needs now is stronger promotion. It's off to a fine start."

J. William Boniface, chairman of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association's sales committee, said immediately afterward that he conferred with John Finney, president of Fasig-Tipton Company, regarding plans for the next year.

Twelve days later, Hip 1 in the sale, a filly by Aristocratic out of the Restless Native mare Aceinrest, won a maiden special weight at Bowie. Named Hail to Rest, she was trained by J. Noel Magee.

■ With her victory in Pimlico's Geisha Handicap – under 130 pounds – 6-year-old Twixt replaced Politely as the greatest money-winning mare bred in Maryland, with more than $571,000. Her 18 stakes wins were a record for Maryland-breds, irrespective of sex. Owned by Mrs. John M. Franklin and breeders John and Kitty Merryman, the daughter of Sagamore sire Restless Native was trained by the Merrymans' daughter Katy Voss, assisted by longtime friend Nat Johnson.

That May, Voss became the fourth woman elected as a member in the American Trainers Association, joining Sally Bailie, Barbara Brown and Wilma Kennedy.

■ Skeets Holland, a one-time jockey and longtime exercise rider, was honored by Pimlico's management with a race in his name, a lunch and a winner's circle presentation. Surrounding the popular backstretch worker throughout the afternoon were his wife, four children and five grandchildren, plus "Brooks Robinson, Cab Calloway, Paul Blair and the little man who shined shoes in the men's room."

SHOULD AUCTION 2-YEAR-OLDS BE PUT TO THE (DRUG) TEST?
Mid-Atlantic
Thoroughbred
Pegasus not Bullet-proof in 125th Preakness

25 years ago

■ Fusaichi Pegasus, a $4 million sales yearling, ran to his looks when sailing to victory in the Kentucky Derby-G1 in 2:01.12, the seventh fastest ever. Sent off at 0.30-1 in the Preakness, the son of Mr. Prospector couldn't catch 6-1 second choice Red Bullet, settling for second after early rain left the track condition good.

■ Frank Stronach and Joe Orseno, owner and trainer respectively of Red Bullet, scored a week earlier in the Grade 1 Pimlico Special with Golden Missile. That year's biggest races in Maryland added up for Stronach and Orseno, as in February they took Laurel's Barbara Fritchie Handicap-G2 with Tap to Music.

■ Flat Top, the Eclipse Award champion steeplechaser of 1998, missed 1999 due to injury, and turned heads in his 2000 return, as the Janet Elliot trainee, ridden by Blythe Miller, took Keeneland's Royal Chase-G1 as if he never left.

Another highlight of the spring hurdle season was Calvin Houghland's All Gong (GB) winning the Grade 1 Atlanta Cup-G1. Trained by Bruce Miller, he was ridden by Blythe Miller, who said: "He's so strong and just didn't let up. He was keener the whole way than I would want – he just motors. I think Chip [her older, stronger brother) needs to ride him."

Flat Top made that solitary start in 2000 and didn't reappear until two years later, a season resulting in a second Eclipse Award. All Gong won the 2000 championship after also winning the Breeders' Cup Steeplechase-G1, with Blythe aboard.

■ The region lost two of its most renowned horsemen. Virgil W. "Buddy" Raines – "one of the finest and most colorful horse trainers of the recent century" – developed numerous standout runners, including champion Open Mind and Preakness winner Greek Money. His life story was nearly as famous, from the time he was given away at age 4 by his horse-trading father, to his journey to become a jockey and trainer. He actively trained until age 86, when he suffered a stroke. He died in Aiken, S.C., at age 89.

Tyson Gilpin, of Clarke County, Va., died at 80. His roles over more than 50 years in the industry included president of Fasig-Tipton Company, the Virginia HBPA and Virginia Thoroughbred Association.

Hometown Heroes

Winton and Stuart Janney Jr. take a moment after winning the Maryland Hunt Cup in 1947. The Maryland-bred won the timber classic in 1942 and again in 1946 and 1947 after the race was not held during World War II. This year, a Maryland-bred won the Hunt Cup for the first time in 10 years, bringing back memories of legends such as Winton. Road to Oz joined Raven's Choice (2015), Twill Do (2010, 2012), Make Me a Champ (2005), Bug River (2004, 2006), Solo Lord (2001), Uncle Merlin (1989), Early Earner (1972), Landing Party (1969, 1971), Jay Trump (1963, 1964, 1966), Mountain Dew (1962, 1965, 1967), Fluctuate (1959, 1960), Third Army (1953), Pine Pep (1949, 1950, 1952) and Winton on the roster of state-bred winners.

Note, records prior to 1962 are incomplete with regard to breeders and state information, but researchers at the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred did the best they could.

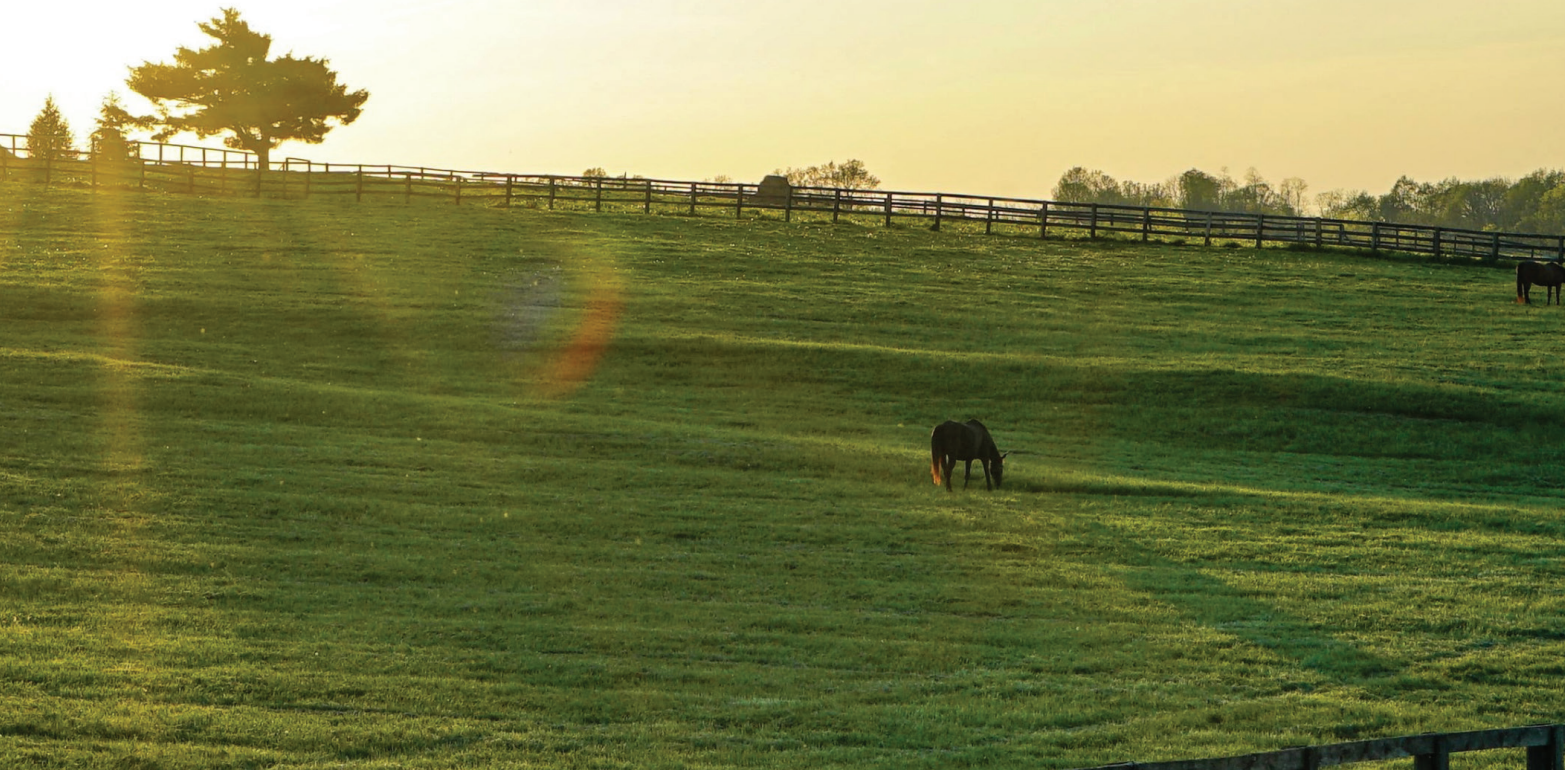
From the Maryland Horse Library archives. *Bert Morgan* photo.

To Our Breeders, Thank You

We wish to thank all the breeders who have sent their mares to our stallions during the 2025 breeding season. Your confidence in our stallion roster encourages us to continue to offer an option for every breeder. We value you as a customer and consider ourselves fortunate for your support. Everyone at Northview Stallion Station wishes you great success and best of luck in all your endeavors. The future of racing in Maryland continues to show a bright and promising future with the combination of the rebuilding of the historic Pimlico Race Course and the addition of a new industry-run training center.

2025 STALLION ROSTER

ENDORSED • ENGAGE • GALAWI (IRE) • GOLDEN LAD • GREAT NOTION • UNCLE LINO



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